



## State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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It is our pleasure to present you with the proposed management course for the Peshtigo River State Forest. This document – known as the *Preferred Alternative and Options* – outlines general proposals for management in recreation, land management, and boundary expansion. This document was created by an interdisciplinary team of land managers, resource specialists, property staff, and state forest planners.

It is clear that both the Department of Natural Resources and the general public care about the management of the Peshtigo River State Forest. By tapping into the strengths of regional and statewide team members, compiling the best available biotic and demographic information, and listening to a variety of perspectives, the Master Planning Team has designed a management path that addresses public concerns while meeting the property's unique vision and goals. Though Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources staff play a large role in the production of the Master Plan, public input is key to a viable and successful plan.

The vision for the Preferred Alternative comes from the planning process that has led up to this document. Earlier this year, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources developed a range of alternatives for management of the Peshtigo River State Forest. On recreation issues, we have listened to folks from all over northeastern Wisconsin – as well as enthusiasts who travel hundreds of miles to enjoy the area's natural wonders – who say they are mostly satisfied with the current level of recreation on the Peshtigo River State Forest. They especially like the water-based opportunities that the Peshtigo River and its flowages provide. Even so, there is a desire to make the Peshtigo River State Forest even better. Along with ideas from internal partners and local land managers, the public has expressed an interest in additional amenities like a horse campground. The Preferred Alternative generally maintains current public uses and access points, while providing for new developments like expanded camping opportunities, improved boat landings, and hiking, biking, and cross-country ski trails. As you will see in the pages to follow, a number of exciting developments have been proposed.

On land management issues, we heard many different opinions and concerns. The Preferred Alternative would continue to provide a range of benefits while establishing Native Community Management Areas and Forest Production Areas. These designations will ensure that special plants, animals, and natural communities will be protected, while allowing for timber harvest operations in other parts of the forest.

On boundary expansion issues, the Preferred Alternative incorporates additional lands to promote ecological values and allow for a greatly expanded trail system.

Our next step is to develop a detailed Draft Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. Some proposals in the Preferred Alternative may be changed in the Draft Master Plan to add further analysis and/or public input.

Please take the time to read this document and send in your comments. We welcome your feedback. Please send letters, emails, or other comments on the Preferred Alternative **by Friday, November 3rd 2006** to:

Dan Mertz, State Forest Superintendent  
N10008 Paust Lane  
Crivitz, WI 54114  
[dan.mertz@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:dan.mertz@dnr.state.wi.us)

Or you may comment via our Peshtigo River State Forest Master Plan website:  
[http://dnr.wi.gov/master\\_planning/ttsp\\_pesh/](http://dnr.wi.gov/master_planning/ttsp_pesh/)

**You may also return the comment form found at the very end of this document.**

Lastly, you are invited to one of three **Open House Public Meetings on the Peshtigo River State Forest Preferred Alternative and Options:**

Tuesday October 17, 2006, 4-8pm  
Stephenson Town Hall  
W11280 County Road X  
Crivitz, WI 54114-8004

Wednesday October 18, 2006, 4-8pm  
WDNR Service Center  
625 E County Road Y Suite 700  
Oshkosh, WI 54901-9731

Thursday October 19, 2006, 4-8pm  
WDNR Northeast Region Headquarters  
2984 Shawano Avenue  
Green Bay, WI 54307-0448

Thank you for your interest in the Peshtigo River State Forest Master Planning process. I look forward to hearing your comments and working with you to make the Peshtigo River State Forest one of Wisconsin's greatest state forests!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Mertz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Dan Mertz, State Forest Superintendent

# **Peshtigo River State Forest Master Plan**

## *Preferred Alternative and Options*



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Forestry  
September 2006



# **Peshtigo River State Forest Master Planning Teams**

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This publication is available in alternative format upon request. Contact the Forestry Program at 608-267-7494.

**Cover Photo:**

South end of the Fly-fishing stretch of the Peshtigo River.

*Photo by J. Lubbers, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.*

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## Executive Summary

This summary provides a brief overview of the preferred alternatives under consideration for the Peshtigo River State Forest. The alternatives are organized under three broad topic areas - land management, recreation, and boundary expansions. The development of the alternatives was guided by the property vision and goals, by the property's capabilities and limitations, and by regional needs and management opportunities on the Forest.

### Overview of the Planning Process

A master plan defines how a property will be managed, used, and developed; how it will look and what benefits it will provide. There are several major phases in the planning process as well as opportunity for public input and participation. The main phases of the planning process are completing the property and regional analysis, establishing the property vision and goals, considering management alternatives, and finally, creating a draft plan and an environmental analysis.

The public played an important role in establishing the vision and goals for the Forest. This occurred in 2002 in conjunction with developing the plan for Governor Thompson State Park. The vision and goals establish the basic focus for the property and master plan. The next major phase for public involvement is review and commenting on the preferred alternative and other alternatives considered. Then, based on the comments received, a draft plan will be developed and that, along with an environmental assessment, will be put out for public review before it is finalized and presented to the Natural Resources Board for approval.

### Highlights of the Proposed Preferred Alternative and Options

#### Proposed Land Management Preferred Alternative

Under the Department's preferred land management alternative for the Peshtigo River State Forest the Forest would be managed to maintain and enhance the existing undeveloped, scenic character of the forest, particularly in the areas viewable from the flowages and the river; to provide renewable forest products through the application of sustainable forest management practices; to protect and perpetuate a number of significant native communities found on the forest; and to provide a variety of habitats for wildlife. Management of the native communities and other actions proposed would protect endangered, threatened, and rare plant and animal species found on the forest.

#### *Forest and Native Community Management*

Under the preferred alternative proposal the Forest would have two management classifications, forest production and native community management. Each classification represents the primary management focus for an area. Approximately 8,000 acres (89% of the Peshtigo River State Forest) would be designated under two forest production areas, and just less than 1,000 acres (11% of the Peshtigo River State Forest) would be in five native community management areas.

The Forest Production Management Areas would be managed for the following purposes (The Preferred Alternative contains specific management objectives for each area):

- Sustainably produce timber and other forest products.
- Maintain and enhance scenic qualities of the Peshtigo River and flowages.
- Protect, maintain, and improve the water quality and riparian habitat.
- Increase white, jack and red pine where suitable, and maintain a diversity of forest types and ages for forest health, aesthetic appeal, and wildlife habitat.

The Native Community Management Areas would be managed for the following purposes. The preferred alternative contains specific management objectives for each area:

- Represent, restore, and perpetuate native plant and animal communities, and other aspects of native biological diversity.
- Maintain a mosaic of rare or representative community types that include older closed canopy forests of longer lived species, such as pines (on the uplands) and northern white cedar (on the lowlands), as well as an undeveloped lake and other unique attributes such as forested seeps and bedrock glades.
- Maintain a diversity of forested and unforest wetlands where suitable.
- Maintain, protect and enhance water quality, including coarse woody habitat.
- Protect rare species habitats and rare natural communities.
- Provide for research, education and ecological interpretation.

### Wildlife Management

The abundant wildlife on the Peshtigo River State Forest requires diverse forest habitats in all successional stages. Diverse and healthy wildlife populations will be maintained by managing the composition and structure of habitats integrated with the land management plan.

### Fisheries Management

The water resources in the Peshtigo River State Forest provide for a range of fish communities. This resource attracts a diverse group of anglers that play a major role in how these waters are managed. Native American treaty harvest rights also play a role. Management goals and activities for these waters vary by the type of water and angling potential. The four main water resources within the forest are cool water lakes, warm water lakes, cold water streams and warm water streams. Fishery management would focus on the following, based on suitable waters and habitats:

- Provide catch and release fishing opportunities as well as trophy opportunities.
- Maintain and enhance a self-sustaining trout fishery where suitable. Improve the food supply, provide cover, and improve spawning substrates.
- Maintain the special regulation category 5 trout waters between Johnson Falls and Sandstone Flowage.
- Conduct beaver control as necessary (limit dams that slow water flow and increase water temperatures).
- Regularly assess the health of the waters and their fishery.
- Set fishing regulations to provide a quality harvest as well as trophy opportunities. Evaluate the regulations to ensure the desired response is occurring in the fishery.



## Proposed Recreation Management Preferred Alternative

The Peshtigo River State Forest preferred recreation management alternative maintains the property's traditional recreational uses and facilities while providing a number of facility upgrades and additions.

### *Water Access and Water Recreation*

All existing flowages and the river access sites would be maintained. A number of improvements are proposed. Typical upgrades would include redesigning parking areas to be more efficient, repairing or upgrading launch ramps, correcting surface drainage problems, and providing boarding docks. A complete listing of water access improvements for each site is given in the Recreation Management Section of the master plan.

Currently many of the boat launch sites are being used for day-use activities like swimming and picnicking. Two sites are proposed to be designated day-use sites with picnic shelters, swimming areas, drinking water, toilets and additional day-use parking added.

### *Camping*

Except for the Twin Bridges County Park campground operated by Marinette County, camping on the forest has been limited to 10 primitive, designated canoe campsites on the flowages. This popular camping opportunity would be maintained and expanded by adding ten "Primitive Water Access Campsites." Primitive Water Access Campsites must be registered and may be used for more than one night. The existing Canoe Campsites need not be registered, but are intended for one night's stay only. Primitive water access campsites provide a flat spot for a tent, box latrine, a fire ring, and picnic table. They are accessible on foot or from the water.

With the recent addition of the rustic campground at Old Veterans Lake, the preferred alternative proposes to continue this 16 site campground and expand it up to a total of 31 sites. An indoor group camp building that would accommodate up to 16 campers is also a proposed addition to the forest. It would be located in the Seymour Rapids area.

### *Trails*

The existing trails and trail uses are proposed to be maintained and expanded. New opportunities for mountain bikers and equestrians would be added.

Snowmobiling on the forest is a cooperative effort with the Marinette County trail system. The existing 20 miles of designated snowmobile trails would be maintained. The existing designated shared winter All-Terrain Vehicle/snowmobile trail use would continue. Because of the Forest's limited capability the development of year round All-Terrain Vehicle trails is not proposed.

Approximately 28 miles of new hiking trails are proposed throughout the Forest. A new opportunity to be offered is mountain biking on a 15-20 mile long loop trail in the Spring Rapids area. Some improvements are proposed for the Spring Rapids cross-country ski trail system, including adding a toilet, drinking water, and a shelter to the trailhead. A new trail head with toilets and water would be constructed at the Seymour Rapids Trail.



In response to demand from equestrians a horse trail and campground is proposed. It would be located on the west side of the High Falls Flowage, south of County Hwy X.

### *Hunting, fishing, trapping and other traditional uses*

Opportunities for these activities will remain abundant on the Forest. Overall access to the flowages, river and lands would be maintained and in some cases improved, particularly by the addition of additional miles of trail.

### Proposed Boundary Expansion Options

The Peshtigo River State Forest as it's currently configured is a long narrow property. This creates a number of management and public use limitations that could be reduced by enlarging the Forest. Further, expanded acquisition for the Forest could extend protection to additional lands along the Peshtigo River, provide large-scale ecological benefits by creating permanent connections to the county forest and national forest, and provide additional recreation opportunities including access and potential expansion of trail networks.

Five areas are presented as potential options for state forest boundary expansion. Each are described briefly below. A preferred boundary expansion alternative has not been selected at this time. A recommendation will be developed for the draft plan after careful review of public comments.

### Potential Peshtigo River State Forest Boundary Expansion Options

*Option 1: Core Area* - Expansion of the current Forest boundary out to roads or other prominent boundaries (27,065 acres).

*Option 2: Roaring Rapids* - Expansion of the Forest boundary up the Peshtigo River corridor to the Marinette County Forest (4,793 acres).

*Option 3: Eagle Creek Watershed* - An area north of Caldron Falls Flowage that would provide expanded forest management opportunities and connection to the Marinette County Forest (7,627 acres).

*Option 4: Thunder River Block* - This area lies south of Governor Thompson State Park and extends west from near the High Falls Flowage to the national forest (10,063 acres). Acquisition of this area would provide opportunities for expansion of recreational trails for the forest and park.

*Option 5: Potato Rapids Block* - This area lies north, west and east from the Peshtigo River State Forest boundary (3,641 acres). Acquisition of this area would create a larger block of continuous forest land connected with Highway E and other public roads, providing watershed protection and improved access.

## Conclusion

The proposals outlined in the Peshtigo River State Forest Preferred Alternative and Options balance forest and ecological management objectives with the need to maintain and enhance recreational opportunities on the forest and the Peshtigo River and flowages. Recreational opportunities would be expanded and existing amenities will be upgraded and enhanced. Any number of the potential boundary expansions would expand ecological and environmental management opportunities as well as expand recreational opportunities and public access to public land. The preferred alternative would insure that the Peshtigo River State Forest would continue to provide important environmental, social, and economic benefits to the citizens of Wisconsin.

## Purpose of State Forests

The management alternatives presented here are an important step in the process of developing a master plan for the Peshtigo River State Forest. The Department's master planning rule (Wisconsin Administrative Code NR44) identifies that these alternatives and the final property master plan must meet the statutory purpose of the property's designation. In this case, the property is a state forest as defined in Wisconsin Statutes 28.

State forests such as the Peshtigo River State Forest are an important part of the Department's broader mission to provide leadership in "all matters pertaining to forestry within the jurisdiction of the state...and advance the cause of forestry within the state" (§28.01). In order to define this mission, the purposes and benefits of state forests are outlined in the following language of 28.04 (2):

(a) The department shall manage the state forests to benefit the present and future generations of residents of this state, recognizing that the state forests contribute to local and statewide economies and to a healthy natural environment. The department shall assure the practice of sustainable forestry and use it to assure that state forests can provide a full range of benefits for present and future generations. The department shall also assure that the management of state forests is consistent with the ecological capability of the state forest land and with the long-term maintenance of sustainable forest communities and ecosystems. These benefits include soil protection, public hunting, protection of water quality, production of recurring forest products, outdoor recreation, native biological diversity, aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, and aesthetics. The range of benefits provided by the department in each state forest shall reflect its unique character and position in the regional landscape.

(b) In managing the state forests, the department shall recognize that not all benefits under par. (a) can or should be provided in every area of a state forest.

(c) In managing the state forests, the department shall recognize that management may consist of both active and passive techniques.

The management alternatives all meet this statutory purpose and will be evaluated to determine how well they could potentially satisfy the unique role of a state forest.

The management alternatives and the master plan for the Peshtigo River State Forest must also implement the vision and goals for the property, which were developed in an earlier stage of the public involvement process.

## **Vision Statement**

The Peshtigo River State Forest is a healthy, dynamic forest, which contributes to the diversity of natural communities in the region. The forest and its resources are managed for present and future generations to provide a broad range of ecological, cultural, social and economic benefits within its capabilities. The natural scenic beauty of the Peshtigo River and its flowages is perpetuated by maintaining a predominately undeveloped shoreline. Compatible recreational opportunities are provided consistent with the scenic beauty and natural settings found within its forestland and along the river and its flowages.

## **Property Goals**

1. Manage the forest and its resources using principles of ecosystem management and sustainable forestry consistent with the ecological capability of the land.
2. Identify and protect rare, threatened and endangered species and areas of geological, archaeological, or cultural significance.
3. Maintain and enhance the natural, undeveloped scenic qualities of the state forest, especially those areas visible from the Peshtigo River and its flowages.
4. Protect and enhance the aquatic resources of the forest.
5. Provide a variety of quality outdoor recreational activities with a focus on non-motorized trail uses primitive camping and water access.
6. Continue links with the existing regional motorized trail network while maintaining environmental quality and harmony with other forest users.
7. Establish compatible, mutually supportive programs and infrastructure with Governor Thompson State Park and other partners for resource protection, education and recreation management.
8. Prevent or minimize conflict among different types of recreational uses and among various types of forest uses and management activities.
9. Acquire additional land for reasons of resource protection, critical development needs, access, boundary protection, boundary continuity, or protection from non-compatible uses.
10. Provide opportunities and access for hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife viewing.
11. Provide for a variety of renewable forest products, wildlife habitats and a diversity of terrestrial and aquatic communities consistent with the ecological capabilities of the land and water.
12. In consultation with tribal governments, provide for the availability and enhancement of treaty resources.

## **Proposed Land Management**

### **Preferred Alternative**

The Peshtigo River State Forest has been divided into seven land management areas: two forest production areas and five native community areas. Each management area describes a unique landscape or management focus that considers soils, topography, community type, and other factors which shape the recommended management for each area. The Peshtigo River State Forest is comprised largely of species that tolerate the nutrient poor, well drained sandy soils. Scrub oak and aspen are the most common species on much of the forest, but some higher quality oak stands occur on more mesic soils. Lowland areas on the forest are uncommon, but support cedar, spruce, and fir. Unique to this area are a number of rock outcroppings, bedrock glades, forested seeps, and the Peshtigo River, which lends a unique scenic quality to the forest.

### **Trends and Issues**

A variety of trends and issues influence master planning and forest management decisions. On the Peshtigo River State Forest, some of the important trends and issues are:

- Habitat fragmentation due to the parcelization of forest land. While this trend is common throughout the region and the state, development pressures are increasing in the area.
- Oak is declining statewide and there is poor regeneration/recruitment.
- Jack pine is declining statewide and locally due to a variety of factors such as lack of fire, poor regeneration, and reduced recruitment in smaller class sizes. This species is highly desirable as a forest commodity in addition to providing wildlife habitat.
- Forest health: much of the harvestable timber on the forest is well past the optimal rotation age and is in decline. As a result, it is susceptible to disease and insect damage, such as white trunk rot in aspen and gypsy moths that prefer oak and aspen. Oak wilt threatens oak stands of all ages. Poor forest health can also lead to natural regeneration difficulties in some species such as oak, aspen, and Jack pine. Dead and dying trees are found in many areas of the forest.
- Soils on the Peshtigo River State Forest are primarily sandy and nutrient poor resulting in low forest productivity and limited tree species diversity.

### **Opportunities and Limitations**

There are several factors limiting forest management on the Peshtigo River State Forest. The first limitation is the size and shape of the property. Because of the linear nature of the property and private land adjacent to it, most land management activities will be highly visible from roads, trails, and private land. Every effort will be made to prevent or limit the view of management activities from the water. Forest aesthetics will be a primary concern as management activities are carried out. Another limitation is the nutrient poor sandy soils. While these soils are well suited for supporting dry forest communities and pine barrens, which are under-represented statewide, they do not support highly productive forests. The numerous stands of scrub oak are not nearly as productive as the less common pine plantations. This presents an opportunity to increase forest productivity by converting some scrub oak acreage to pine, while managing for

uncommon communities and species. However, the areas where this conversion can take place are limited by aesthetic and other concerns.

The Forest is located in an area and region with abundant public lands. Specifically, the forest could potentially provide a virtually uninterrupted link between the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest and Marinette County forest lands. A corridor of this nature would provide innumerable ecological benefits as well as expanding recreational opportunities. And lastly, the Peshtigo River and flowages, which are the defining features of this property, provide a number of ecological, recreational, and aesthetic benefits. Enhancing and protecting the riparian habitat is an important goal of the forest.

## **Land Management Objectives**

Below are broad management objectives for both Forest Production Areas and Native Community Areas. The preferred alternative contains specific management objectives for each area. Both management classifications are subject to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's 200 foot buffer zone along the river and flowages. Forest management activities in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission buffer zone are limited to insure scenic and aesthetic qualities of the riparian area. More than 1000 acres of forest land around the flowages is in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission buffer zone.

### **Forest Production Management Areas**

- Sustainably produce timber and other forest products.
- Maintain and enhance scenic qualities of the Peshtigo River and flowages.
- Protect, maintain, and improve the water quality and riparian habitat.
- Increase white, jack and red pine where suitable.
- Maintain a diversity of forest types and ages for forest health, aesthetic appeal, and wildlife habitat.

### **Native Community Management Areas**

- Restore and maintain native plant and animal communities, and other aspects of native biological diversity.
- Maintain a mosaic of rare or representative community types that include older closed canopy forests of longer lived species, such as pines (on the uplands) and northern white cedar (on the lowlands), as well as an undeveloped lake and other unique attributes such as forested seeps and bedrock glades.
- Maintain a diversity of forested and unforested wetlands where suitable.
- Maintain, protect and enhance water quality, including coarse woody habitat.
- Protect rare species habitats and rare natural communities.
- Provide for research, education and ecological interpretation.

## Highlights of the Land Management Preferred Alternative

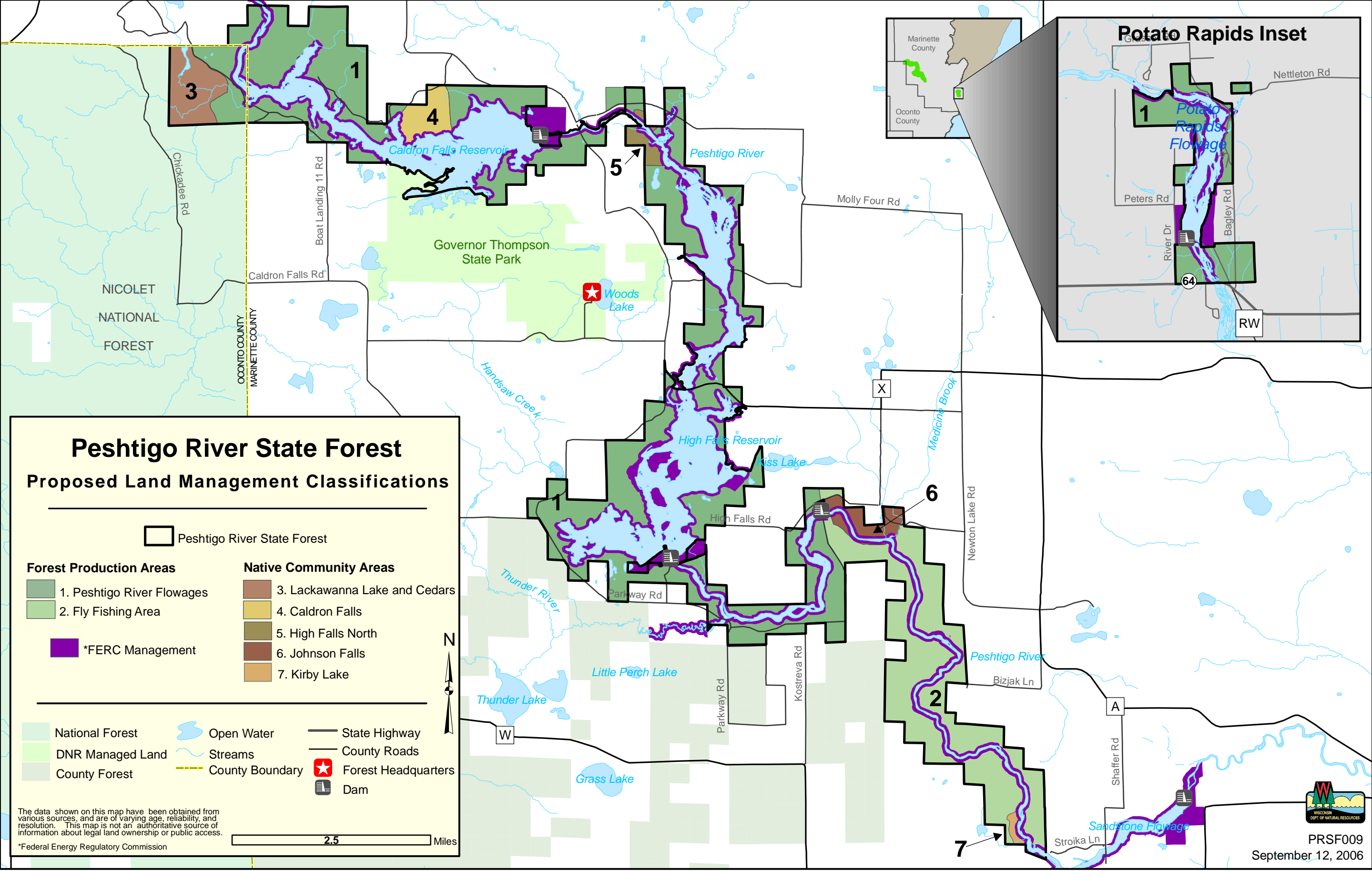
The forest has been divided into two management classifications: two forest production land management areas and five native community land management areas. Detailed summaries of each area are listed below.

### Forest Production Land Management Classification

Area 1: Peshtigo River Flowages	6,095 acres
Area 2: Fly Fishing Area	1,983 acres

### Native Community Land Management Classification

Area 3: Lake Lackawanna and Cedars	358 acres
Area 4: High Falls North	101 acres
Area 5: Johnson Falls	206 acres
Area 6: Caldron Falls	223 acres
Area 7: Kirby Lake	45 acres





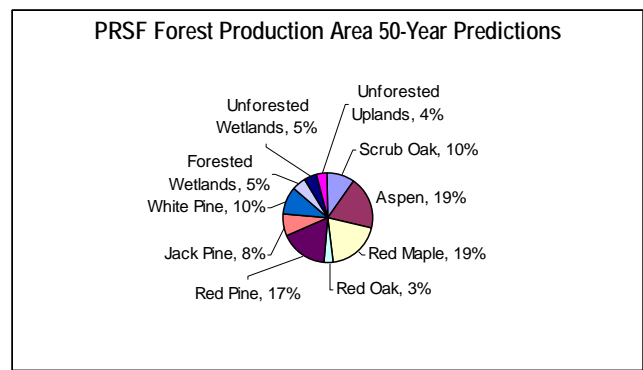
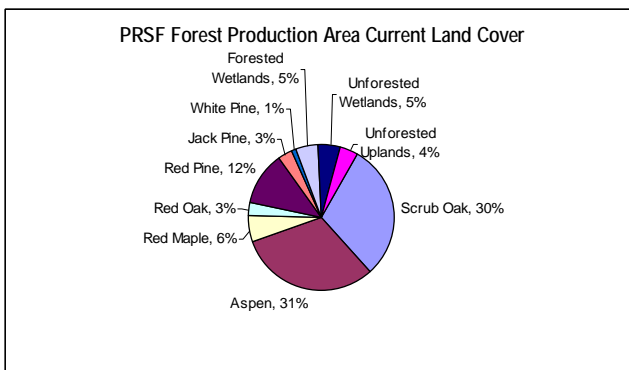


## Forest Production Land Management Classification

### Area 1: Peshtigo River Flowages

This area is comprised of 6,095 acres. It includes most of the land surrounding the flowages of the Peshtigo River from Boat Landing 12 at the northwest corner of the forest to Highway 64 at the southeast corner of the forest. The flowages in this area are Caldron Falls, High Falls, Johnson Falls, and Potato Rapids. This area is a relatively narrow strip of flat, dry, land surrounding the flowages. Much of the land is near the water, public roads, recreational trails, or other recreational sites. Private land and seasonal residences are adjacent to much of this area. Due to the size and shape of the property, there are no large blocks of remote land.

### Current and Future Land Cover



### Summary

- 6,095 acres.
- Opportunity to manage for jack, red, and white pine.

### Long Term Management Objectives (100 years)

- Maintain and enhance scenic qualities of the Peshtigo River and flowages.
- Protect, maintain, and improve the water quality and riparian habitat of the Peshtigo River and flowages.
- Maintain a diversity of forest cover types and ages for forest health, aesthetic appeal, and wildlife habitat.
- Increase white pine in suitable habitats.
- Maintain red oak, aspen, jack pine, and red pine cover types.
- Maintain scrub oak and red maple except in areas suitable for increasing white pine.

### Short Term Management Objectives (50 years)

- Maintain a diversity of forest cover types and ages for the overall health of the forest, for aesthetic appeal, and provide wildlife habitat.
- Maintain the acreage of red oak.
- Reduce the total acreage of aspen by allowing natural conversion to white pine, red maple, and other species in the 200 foot zone.

- Decrease the acreage of scrub oak by naturally converting some acreage to white pine, aspen, or red maple, and actively converting some scrub oak acreage to red, jack, or white pine through planting.

### *Resource Management Prescriptions*

Forest management on the Peshtigo River State Forest follow accepted forestry techniques practices. Due to the potential for high visibility of most forest management activities on the forest, efforts will be made to minimize the visual impact using aesthetic management techniques such as restricting the size of cuts, conducting partial harvests, retaining single trees or groups of trees, creating irregular or feathered harvest boundaries, controlling logging slash, planting trees, managing for longer lived species, harvesting during the winter, etc.:

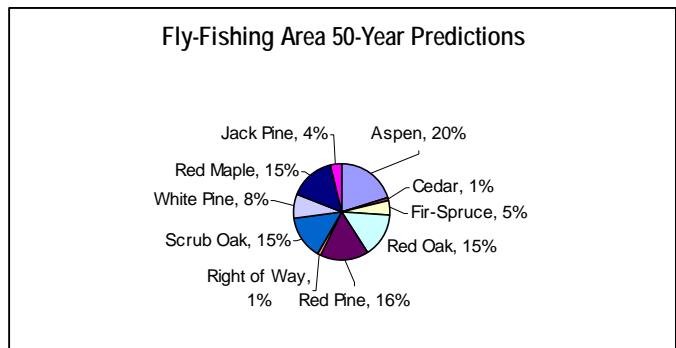
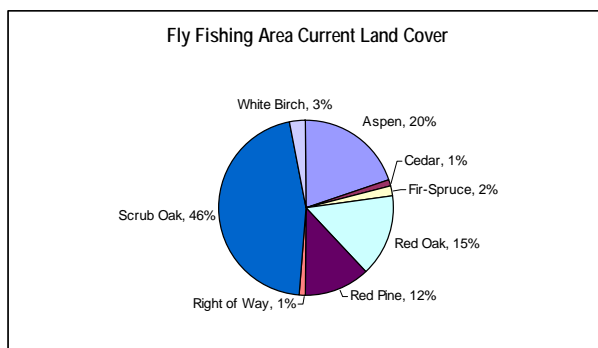
- Retain snags and coarse woody habitat whenever their retention does not conflict with other forest management objectives, including riparian areas.
- Increase the white pine acreage primarily through natural conversion and promote the growth and retention of large white pine trees.
- Comply with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission requirements pertaining to the 200 foot zone as defined elsewhere in the master plan.
- Increase the acreage of red, jack, and white pines by converting areas of scrub oak to pines. Replacement by red pine or jack pine is influenced by a variety of factors including but not limited to: site suitability, visibility, and deer browse.

## **Forest Production Land Management Classification**

### **Area 2: Fly Fishing Area**

The Fly Fishing Area is comprised of 1,983 acres. This area includes all land downstream from Johnson Falls to the end of Spring Rapids, excluding that portion between the dam and the mouth of Medicine Brook which is designated as the Johnson Falls Native Community. Johnson Falls Road is the northwest boundary. This area is the only significant stretch of free flowing river on the Peshtigo River State Forest. Upstream, the flow of the river is regulated by dams and is maintained to imitate the natural fluctuations of the river, maintaining a relatively stable environment for aquatic species. The steep slopes of this valley are a sharp contrast to the flat topography found on much of the rest of the forest. Harvest in this area will be limited due to steep slopes, visual impact, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission zone.

### *Current and Future Land Cover*



### *Summary*

- 1,983 acres.
- Includes most of the state owned land downstream from Johnson Falls.
- Only significant stretch of free flowing river on the forest.
- Approximately 635 acres cannot be harvested in this area due to steep slopes, visual impact, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission zone.

### *Long Term Management Objectives (100 years)*

- Protect and enhance scenic and water quality of the Peshtigo River and flowages.
- Manage the forest for a diversity of forest cover types and ages for forest health, aesthetic appeal, and wildlife habitat.
- Maintain red oak, aspen, jack pine, and red pine cover types.
- Increase white pine acreage.
- Maintain scrub oak and red maple acreage except as the opportunity exists to convert these stands to white pine.

### *Short Term Objectives (50 years)*

- Maintain current levels of red oak.
- Maintain current levels of aspen.
- Decrease the acreage of scrub oak.
- Increase the total acreage of both red pine and jack pine by 4% of the total acreage of the forest production area.
- Increase the acreage of white pine.

### *Resource Management Prescriptions*

Management actions in this area follow the General Management Prescriptions, as described in the beginning of the Land Management Section and all management activities are authorized, except as limited by the prescriptions below:

- Minimize, as practicable, the visibility of forest management activities from the river during the summer. Some aesthetic management techniques that may be used are: restricting the size of cuts, conducting partial harvests, retaining single trees or groups of trees, creating irregular or feathered harvest boundaries, controlling logging slash, planting trees, managing for longer lived species, harvesting during the winter, etc.
- Conduct passive management on areas too steep to harvest timber. These areas will be identified on a stand by stand basis whenever a timber harvest is proposed. It is estimated that 5% of the acreage of the Fly Fishing Area is too steep to harvest. These areas may also be ecologically and/or aesthetically sensitive sites.
- Retain snags and coarse woody habitat whenever their retention does not conflict with other forest management objectives, including riparian areas.
- Maintain the acreage of aspen by naturally converting some oak acreage to aspen. This is designed to compensate for aspen acreage that will succeed to other species due to some aspen stands being located in areas where aspen regeneration harvests are not possible (e.g. in the 200 foot wide Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Zone).

- Naturally convert scrub oak to white pine, aspen, or red maple where suitable and forcibly convert some scrub oak acreage to red, jack, or white pine. Replacement by red pine or jack pine is influenced by a variety of factors including but not limited to: site suitability, visibility, deer browse and competition from the current cover-type after harvest.

### *Alternatives Considered*

Issue: Management Focus

Preferred Alternative: Forest Production Area

Other Alternative: Designate special forest management zones along the free-flowing portion of the river corridor based on slopes, hydrology, topography, and vegetation types. These zones would be given a special emphasis using passive management and allowing for natural regeneration and conversion in many areas. The goals would be to maintain an intact forested corridor that would provide for connectivity between forested blocks and minimize deer impacts to the area. Most of the declining aspen stands would be allowed to naturally convert to other longer-lived species and increasing the conifer component of the forest would be primarily through natural white pine regeneration where possible.

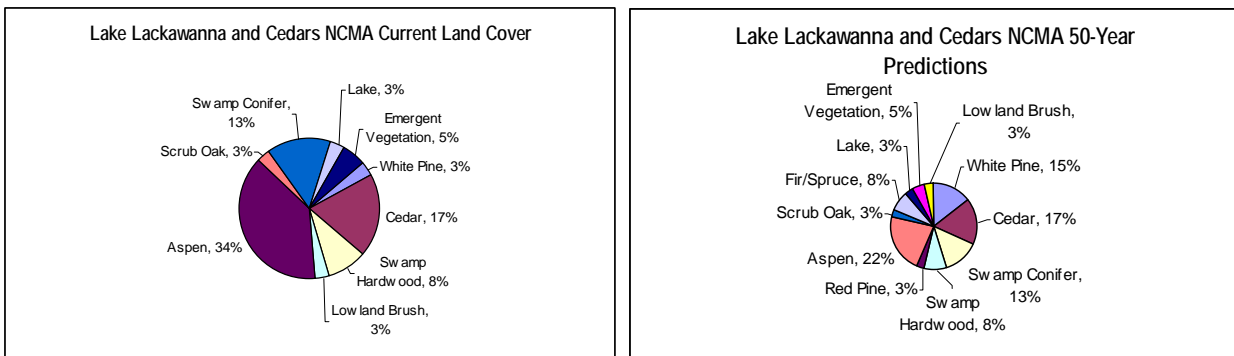
This alternative was not chosen because 1) it would not allow for maintaining current levels of aspen acreage for forest productivity and habitat for wildlife game species, 2) would result in a number of declining oak and aspen stands that would persist for several years and could be expected to be more susceptible to gypsy moth infestations, 3) would be less productive, 4) would not allow for establishing jack pine in this area, and 5) in areas dominated by aspen, losing the site to hazel brush competition for a period of time. As noted above, even with the proposed Forest Production emphasis, a large portion of this area will not be actively managed due to the steep slopes, visual impact, and the 200 foot Federal Energy Regulatory Commission zone.

## Native Community Land Management Classification

### Area 3: Lake Lackawanna and Cedars

This 358 acre site is comprised of a diverse mosaic of upland and wetland community types. The site features a small hard water drainage lake surrounded by several wetland types and an associated stream, as well as an extensive Northern Wet-mesic Forest dominated by 100 (+) year-old white cedar. Though the lake is entirely state owned, the main inlet passes through private land from Crandall Lake to the north. Two plants of Special Concern have been documented at this site in both wet and dry habitats.

### Current and Future Land Cover



### Summary

- This area is approximately 358 acres in size with 100% of it in state ownership.
- Opportunity to develop an older, dry-mesic closed canopy forest of longer lived species like white pine on the uplands while maintaining the diverse wetland community, including northern white cedar, on the lowlands.
- Protect and enhance rare species habitats, natural communities, and water quality.

### Long Term Management Objectives (100 Years)

- Protect, maintain and enhance scenic and water quality of Lake Lackawanna, the Peshtigo River and its flowages.
- Manage for a mosaic of community types dominated by an older closed canopy forest of longer lived species such as white pine (on the uplands) and northern white cedar (on the lowlands).
- Protect and enhance rare species habitats and natural communities through active and passive forest management techniques.
- Provide opportunities for research, education and ecological interpretation.

### *Short Term Objectives (50 years)*

- Perform forest management activities consistent with long term management goals.

### *Resource Management Prescriptions*

The General Timber Type Management Prescriptions and all of their associated management activities (described at the beginning of the land management section) apply, except as limited by the prescriptions below:

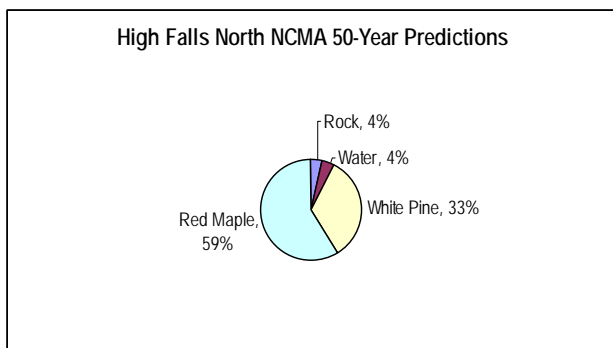
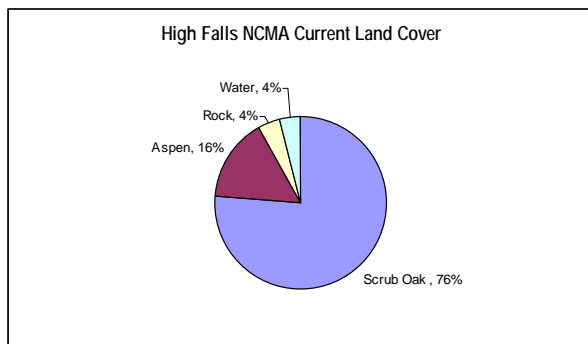
- Actively manage the uplands to favor white pine while maintaining structural and species diversity.
- Actively manage existing red pine plantations to create stands that look natural with large trees.
- Passively manage forested lowlands.
- Actively control beaver populations and mitigate the impacts of beaver damage if they negatively affect the cedar swamp(s).
- Continue to monitor for rare species, including the State Threatened Red-shouldered Hawk.

## **Native Community Land Management Classification**

### **Area 4: High Falls North**

This 121 acre (including 20 acres in private ownership) native community area is located on the northernmost end of High Falls Reservoir, just north of Old Veterans Lake Campground. It includes areas on both sides of the flowage and encompasses about one mile of shoreline. The major features are Bedrock Glades embedded within Northern Dry Forest and Northern Dry Mesic Forest, two forest types that are representative of this landscape. The Bedrock Glades have the potential to support rare plants. This area is hilly and contains numerous granite rock outcrops, both on the shoreline and farther inland. Most of the soils, with the exception of a few low lying pockets, are dry and sandy. A designated snowmobile trail runs through this area on the southerly side of the flowage.

### *Current and Future Land Cover*





### *Summary*

- 101 acres in state ownership.
- 20 acres privately owned.
- Opportunity to manage for bedrock glades and the unique communities they support.

### *Long Term Management Objectives (100 Years)*

- Protect, maintain and enhance scenic and water quality of the Peshtigo River and flowages.
- Encourage a diversity of forest cover types and ages for forest health, aesthetic appeal, and habitat for a variety of wildlife species.
- Enhance structural and species diversity of the forest.
- Increase the conifer component of the forest, particularly white pine. Protect and enhance the bedrock glades and the unique communities they support.

### *Short Term Management Objectives (50 Years)*

- Increase the conifer component of the forest, particularly white pine.
- Increase the red maple component of the forest.
- Decrease aspen and scrub oak.
- Allow for development of coarse woody habitat and snag trees.

### *Resource Management Prescriptions*

Management actions in this area follow the General Management Prescriptions as described in the beginning of the Land Management Section and all management activities are authorized, except as limited by the prescriptions below:

- Protect the bedrock glades.
- Passively manage much of the site to allow the forest to transition to an uneven-aged multi-species forest.
- Use techniques such as partial cutting, where necessary. Portions of the glades could be kept in a mostly open condition with scattered large trees to favor light-demanding and intermediate glade and dry-forest/woodland associated plants.
- Minimize the visual impact of forest management activities such as timber harvesting.
- Increase white pine primarily through natural conversion and promote the growth and retention of large white pine trees.
- Decrease the amount of aspen and scrub oak by naturally converting to white pine and red maple.
- Retain snags and coarse woody habitat whenever their retention does not conflict with other forest management activities or present hazards.
- Utilize the Department of Natural Resources Old Growth Handbook (currently in preparation) for possible guidelines for managing older rotation mixed oak-pine stands.

### *Alternatives Considered*

#### Issue: Boundary Modifications and Refinement

Preferred Alternative: Modify the original boundary from the biotic inventory's "Primary Site." Trimming the boundary in the northeast portion of the site to exclude an area that did not contain bedrock glades. The new boundary limits the area north of the river to the prominent bedrock features along the river.

Other Alternative: Keep the Biotic Inventory Primary Site boundary. This alternative was not chosen since the site would have included areas that were not consistent with the goals for this site.

#### Issue: Management Focus - Barrens Management

Preferred Alternative: Manage the site for an older, multi-species Northern Dry / Dry-mesic forest with increased proportions of red maple and conifers (favoring white pine) with high-quality bedrock inclusions.

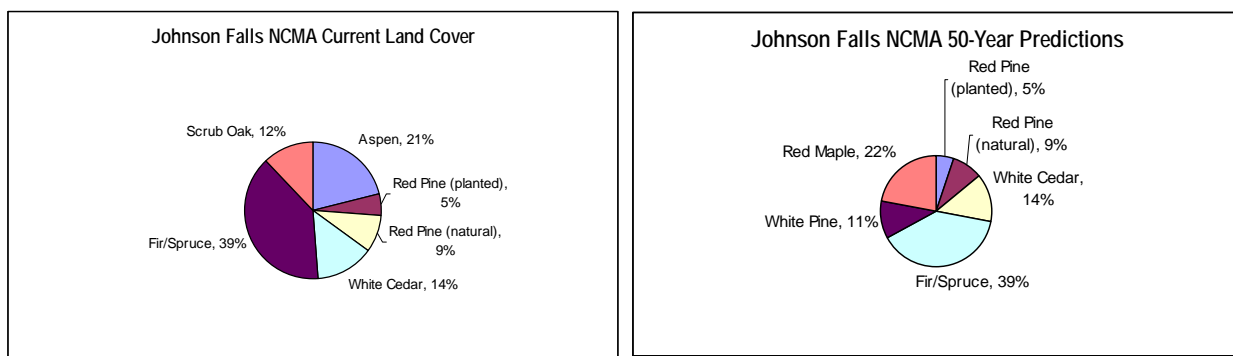
Other Alternative: Manage the site for barrens along with Northern dry forest. The alternative was not chosen due to the lack of opportunities for managing for high-quality barrens at this site.

## **Native Community Land Management Classification**

### Area 5: Johnson Falls

This area encompasses 251 acres (including 45 acres in private ownership) on both sides of the Peshtigo River from just below the Johnson Falls Dam to the mouth of Medicine Brook. This portion of the river flows through a narrow valley with steep slopes and gently rolling sand plains above the valley. The area is diverse and complex in terms of hydrology, topography, soils, and vegetation and supports a mosaic of good quality natural communities including Northern Dry-mesic Forest, Northern Wet-mesic Forest (cedar swamp), Bedrock Glade, a small Hardwood Swamp and inclusionary seeps, springs, and spring runs. Several rare plants and high-quality natural communities, as well as a State-Threatened animal are known from this site

### *Current and Future Land Cover*



### *Summary*

- 206 acres in state ownership.
- 45 acres in private ownership
- Opportunity to manage for high-quality community types and rare plants.

### *Long Term Management Objectives (100 years)*

- Protect, maintain and enhance scenic and water quality of the Peshtigo River and flowages.
- Develop and maintain a forest with old growth characteristics.
- Protect rare species habitats and rare natural communities.
- Provide opportunities for research, education, and interpretation.

### *Short Term Management Objectives (50 years)*

- Perform forest management activities consistent with long term management goals.

### *Resource Management Prescriptions*

The General Timber Type Management Prescriptions and all of their associated management activities (described at the beginning of the land management section) apply, except as limited by the prescriptions below:

- Actively manage the red pine plantations to create stands with a more natural appearance and certain old growth characteristics, favoring natural conversion to long lived species such as white pine.
- Passively manage all areas that are not red pine plantations to allow for the development of white pine and other long-lived species, as well as increased coarse woody debris, standing snags, and tree age diversity.

### *Alternatives Considered*

Issue: Location of boundaries

Preferred Alternative: Expand the original boundary (same as the Johnson Falls Dam “Primary Site” from the *Biotic Inventory*) to include all state owned lands which are west and north of the Medicine Brook up to the Johnson Falls Dam, and including all privately owned lands south of High Falls Road. This alternative is preferred because it includes all the lands that contain the high quality natural communities and associated species which are in need of special management.

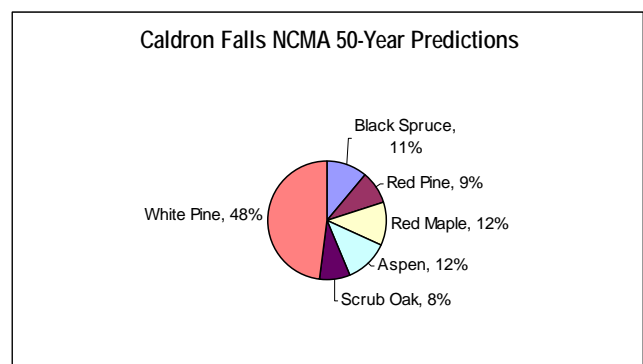
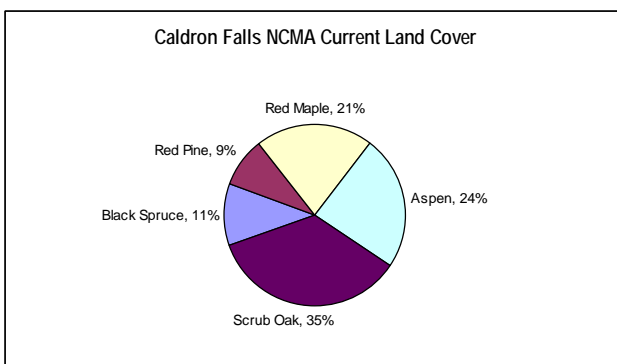
Other Alternative: Adopt the original boundary which was not inclusive enough.

## Native Community Land Management Classification

### Area 6: Caldron Falls

This 223 acre management area is located along the north shore of the Caldron Falls Reservoir and features a large block of Northern Dry-mesic Forest surrounding two shallow peaty depressions containing good quality Black Spruce Swamp. There is at least one Ephemeral Pond, a rare feature in the landscape, located within the site. This area represents one of the best opportunities on the PRSF and surrounding landscape to manage for a larger, contiguous block of intact Northern Dry-mesic Forest, which could benefit numerous species. The Black Spruce Swamps have good plant diversity that is representative of this type.

### Current and Future Land Cover



### Summary

- 223 acres, entirely in state ownership.
- Opportunity to maintain a forest mosaic with large, old trees representing later forest successional stages with high-quality wetland inclusions.
- Opportunity to manage for longer-lived species.

### Long Term Management Objectives (100 years)

- Protect, maintain and enhance scenic and water quality of the Peshtigo River and flowages.
- Develop an older, closed canopy forest of longer lived species such as white pine on the uplands and both white pine and black spruce on the lowlands.
- Maintain black spruce stands.
- Protect rare species habitats and rare natural communities.
- Provide opportunities for research, education, and interpretation.

### Short Term Management Objectives (50 years)

- Perform forest management activities consistent with long term management goals.
- Actively manage the uplands to favor long lived species such as white pine, moving towards a goal of an older closed canopy forest.

*Resource Management Prescriptions*

The General Timber Type Management Prescriptions and all of their associated management activities described at the beginning of the land management section apply, except as limited by the prescriptions below:

- Passively manage the black spruce depressions.
- Actively manage red pine plantations to create stands that look natural with large trees, grown to biological maturity, with the long term goal of natural conversion to a diverse forest that includes white pine as a major associate.
- Maintain a component of scrub oak for diversity and wildlife benefits.
- Actively manage aspen, red maple, oak, and swamp hardwood stands using techniques which promote natural conversion to white pine.

*Alternatives Considered*

Issue: Location of boundary.

Preferred Alternative: Adopt a boundary similar to the Caldron Falls Primary Site from the Biotic Inventory, except that the west line will be expanded to the east shoreline of Boat Landing 10 Bay, and the north boundary will be expanded slightly northward to the present property line.

Other Alternative: Adopt the original Caldron Falls Primary Site boundary without any changes. This was not adopted because it excluded some small areas to the west and north that logically should be included in the native community.

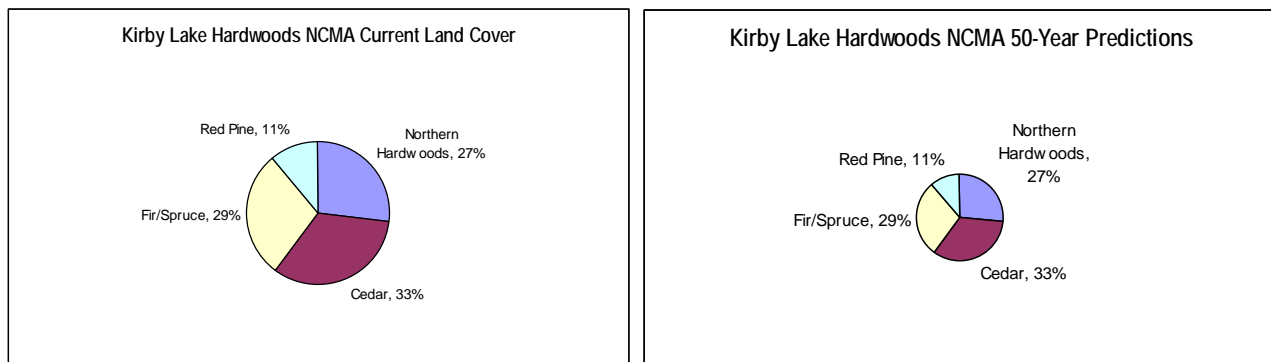
Other Alternative: Expand the original Caldron Falls Primary Site boundary to the west and north as described above, but shrink the east boundary slightly to the legal description line to make a hard boundary. This alternative was not chosen because it did not allow an adequate buffer on the east side for the black spruce swamp.

## Native Community Land Management Classification

### Area 7: Kirby Lake

This 45 acre proposed native community area is located along the west side of the Peshtigo River at the southernmost end of the Peshtigo River State Forest - just north of the Sandstone Flowage and approximately 0.3 miles east of Kirby Lake. The major features of this area are patches of Northern Wet-mesic Forest, mature rich Northern Mesic Forest, spring seepages, and four rare (Special Concern) plants. The cedar swamp has cedar regenerating in several size classes. The rich Northern Mesic Forest exists only on narrow bands of steep slopes in other areas of the forest and is rare in the Northeast Sands Ecological Landscape.

### Current and Future Land Cover



### Summary

- 45 acres.
- Small, but unique representation of Northern Wet-mesic forest and Northern Mesic Forest in the area.
- Opportunity to manage for cedar and other wet mesic species and communities.
- Opportunity to protect several rare plant species of Special Concern.

### Long Term Management Objectives (100 years)

- Protect, maintain and enhance scenic and water quality of the Peshtigo River and flowages.
- Develop and maintain a forest with old growth characteristics.
- Maintain the unique hydrology throughout the site.
- Protect rare species habitats and rare natural communities.
- Provide opportunities for research, education, and interpretation.

### Short Term Management Objectives (50 years)

- Perform forest management activities consistent with long term management goals.

### Resource Management Prescriptions

- Passively manage this area to prevent soil disturbance and allow natural conversion to a forest with old growth characteristics.

*Alternatives Considered*

Issue: Management Focus

Preferred Alternative: Manage this site as a Native Community Management Area. Important features to protect include Northern Mesic Forest, Northern Wet-mesic Forest, and several rare plants.

Other Alternative: Include this site with the nearby Fly-fishing Area, utilizing similar management that is proposed for that site (currently an emphasis on forest production with aesthetic considerations). This was not chosen because it would not adequately address management considerations for this site.



## **Proposed Recreation Management**

### **Preferred Alternative**

Recreation on the Peshtigo River State Forest is important to many people and plays an important role in the regional tourism economy. Visitors have been coming to the river and its adjacent lands for generations, and those who vacation or live near the forest know the beauty of its flowages, the diversity of its trails, and the extent of its forests. Fortunately, opportunities abound for recreational activities on the water and throughout the forest.

Since the forest was established, annual visitation to the Peshtigo River State Forest has increased steadily. The most popular recreational activities include fishing, boating, snowmobiling and hunting. There is also demand for new and improved recreational trails like hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding trails. While the Peshtigo River State Forest does not currently have any designated mountain biking or horseback riding opportunities, there has been a dramatic increase in demand for such opportunities statewide as well as the Peshtigo River State Forest area. There has also been increased pressure for additional water camping opportunities. Further, there is a shortage of designated beaches in the area; most people currently swim at a number of boat launches on the flowages.

The Peshtigo River State Forest Master Plan will maintain nearly all of the existing recreational amenities and opportunities that were available under Wisconsin Public Service Corporation management. It also provides for a number of amenity expansions or additions to help meet growing demand. The primary additions include an equestrian campground, more canoe and water-based campsites, the creation of designated day-use areas, several expanded boat landings, and more hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking trails. In addition, an increased emphasis would be put on self-guided interpretive trails to promote forestry awareness and natural history. Most of the recreational facilities and amenities are shown on the Current and Proposed Recreation map.

### **Recreation Management Objectives**

- Provide a range of camping opportunities by maintaining and upgrading existing camping facilities and by establishing new or enhanced facilities including primitive canoe camping, primitive water camping, rustic family camping, indoor group camping, and equestrian camping.
- Provide areas for day uses such as picnicking, boating, swimming as well as passive recreational activities by maintaining and upgrading existing facilities and by establishing two new day use areas – one on High Falls Reservoir and one on Caldron Falls Reservoir.
- Provide access to the waters of the Peshtigo River and its reservoirs by maintaining and upgrading the existing boat landings and canoe access points.
- Provide a system of designated and non-designated non-motorized recreational trails by maintaining, and in some cases enhancing, existing trails and by the establishment of new trails and trail segments.
- Provide designated snowmobile trails at existing levels.
- Support traditional outdoor sporting activities such as hunting, trapping, fishing, archery, etc, by maintaining and enhancing existing boat landings, access points, and other facilities.

## Summary of Recreation Management Preferred Alternative

### Camping

- Addition of 15 rustic campsites to the recently acquired Old Veterans Lake Campground. Amenities would include vault toilets, hand pumped water, and gravel roads.
- Indoor group camp facility for 16 people. This facility would have electricity, indoor plumbing, and sleeping accommodations. Proposed siting in the Seymour Rapids area.
- Addition of nine primitive campsites along the Peshtigo River and its reservoirs. Primitive campsites are limited to a tent clearing, fire ring, box latrine and a picnic table. These sites are accessible by watercraft or by foot.
- Equestrian campground with 20 rustic sites including vault toilets, potable water, manure bins, a corral area, and a group gathering area. Individual campsites would have fire rings, picnic tables, hitching posts, tent pads and a parking area. This would be sited near High Falls Reservoir.

### Day-Use Areas

- Creation of two new fee required day-use areas. These areas would include: water, vault toilets with a changing area, a designated beach with a marked swimming area, picnic tables, grills, fire rings, fishing pier and a 100 car parking lot. There would also be an expansion and renovation of the adjoining boat landings.

### Boat Landings

Boat landing types include canoe slides, carry-in, cement plank, and gravel. Not all boat landings would have the same amenities, but most would see some improvements including:

- Additional parking.
- Addition of facilities such as bathrooms, changing rooms, and water.
- Fishing pier, launch approach, and boat boarding dock.
- Erosion control and repair for the parking lots and approaches.

### Non-Motorized Recreation

#### *Hiking and Mountain Biking*

- 28 miles of new hiking trails on primitive, low maintenance trails.
- Day-hiking opportunities would continue to be offered on the woods road network and on various volunteer trails.
- Propose a 15-20 mile-long mountain bike loop. This new trail system would be located within the Spring Rapids Trail System with future expansion into the Seymour Rapids section.

### *Cross-country Ski Trails*

- Moderate adjustments would be made to the Spring Rapids Trail System to avoid conflicts with creek crossing and user conflicts.
- An upgrade to the Spring Rapids trailhead would be made, with amenities to include a vault toilet, water, and a shelter.
- A new trailhead would be built at the entrance of the Seymour Rapids Trail. Amenities would include a vault toilet and water.

### *Horseback Trails*

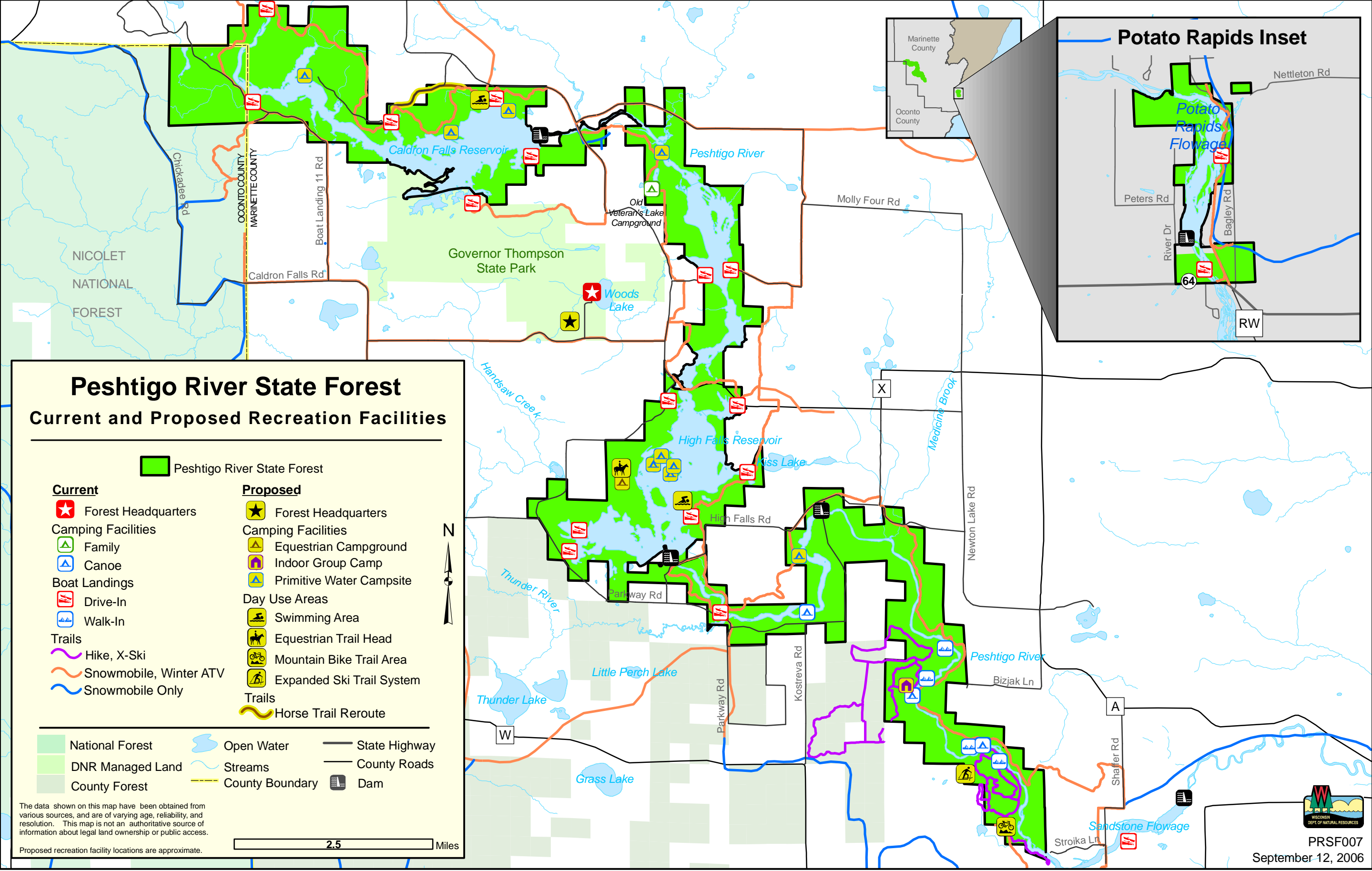
- The state forest would provide designated equestrian trails on the west side of High Falls (south of Highway X) and the south side of Johnson Falls.
- A new trailhead would be built south of Highway X, on the west side of High Falls, and near the proposed horse campground. This would accommodate 20 trailers and would also have a vault toilet.

### **Motorized Recreation**

There would be no significant changes to the snowmobile trails located on the Peshtigo River State Forest. Currently the Peshtigo River State Forest has a network of over 20 miles of snowmobile trails that link state land with private and county snowmobile trails.

Licensed cycles, 4x4s, and other street-legal vehicles may operate on open Peshtigo River State Forest roads (including logging roads) that are not bermed, gated or signed as closed. The Peshtigo River State Forest policy regarding the use of street licensed motor vehicles would remain unchanged.

The proposed plan does not designate any future ATV trail expansion. The state forest would continue to cooperate with regional partners and maintain the existing ATV trail network while maintaining environmental quality and harmony with other forest users.





## Preferred Alternative

### Camping

The Peshtigo River State Forest provides a limited number of primitive canoe camping opportunities. Currently there are 10 canoe sites at 3 different locations along the Peshtigo River. One area of potential campground expansion is the newly acquired Old Veterans Lake Campground. A new camping opportunity would be available in the form of a horse campground west of High Falls Reservoir and east of Parkway Road. In addition, four island campsites would be available on High Falls Reservoir, and one remote access site would be available on each of Caldron Falls, High Falls, and Johnson Falls reservoirs. The future camping expansions are based on camping demand projections and available funding. Other considerations for where to site new camping opportunities include their proximity to water and the availability of suitable land for expansion.

In addition to adding new campsites, all or portions of campsites may be renovated. The density of campsites (i.e. separation distance between sites) in the campground may be substantially out of compliance with newer requirements of NR 44.07(7) (e). If so, it requires that there be 100 to 200 feet of space between sites for rustic campgrounds, and approximately 100 feet for modern campgrounds. The purpose of this wider campsite spacing is to enhance privacy, increase the sense of solitude, and minimize conflicts between camping groups. To come into compliance with the new requirements, and address safety and site suitability concerns, campsites may be closed and relocated to another part of the campground at the discretion of the Forest Superintendent.

### *Rustic Family Campgrounds*

Many people have come to associate traditional rustic style campgrounds with state forests. Campers are attracted to the small, quiet character of state forest campgrounds in contrast to more modern or developed campgrounds. Typically, these campgrounds range from about 20 to 70 campsites, and often have wider spacing than modern campgrounds. Furthermore, they have only minimal facilities including hand-pumped water and pit toilets. Generally, electric campsites are not provided in this type of campground.

One opportunity for providing this type of camping experience is the former Marinette County Old Veterans Lake Campground. Old Veterans Lake has been acquired by the state as part of a land transaction with Marinette County. This facility currently features 16 rustic spur-type campsites adjacent to a small lake, vault toilets, hand pumped water, and gravel roads. This style of campground fits well with the rustic recreational theme of state forests. An additional 15 campsites would be constructed at this facility, bringing the total number of campsites at Old Veterans Lake up to 31.

In addition to constructing new rustic campsites, all or portions of the existing campsites at Old Veterans Lake may be renovated. To address safety or site suitability concerns, some campsites may be closed and relocated to another part of the campground. Also, the density of campsites (i.e. separation distance between sites) would be brought up to a standard of 100 to 200 feet between sites wherever possible. The purpose of this wider campsite spacing is to enhance privacy, increase the sense of solitude, and minimize conflicts between camping groups.

### *Indoor Group Camp*

Indoor group campgrounds provide an excellent opportunity for large groups of people to gather without affecting the experiences of other campers. Such a facility could be used by Boy and Girl Scout troops, church groups, extended family reunions, and other large group gatherings. One indoor group cabin, with electricity, water, and sleeping accommodations for up to 16 people, is proposed for the Seymour Rapids area. This site was selected because of its scenic beauty and recreational opportunities, easy access to and from the road network, and close proximity to the Peshtigo River.

#### **Alternatives Considered**

##### *Indoor Group Camp*

One alternative site discussed was near the rustic family campground and High Falls Reservoir. This site was not selected because of its poor soil type, concerns over additional development near the High Falls Reservoir, poor road and utility access, and the close proximity to the family campground.

### *Primitive Camping*

The Peshtigo River State Forest currently offers one type of primitive camping experience: canoe camping. The current locations of existing designated primitive campsites are shown on the Current and Proposed Recreation map. Primitive campsites generally are widely dispersed, have minimal clearing, and have a native soil surface. Primitive campsites are limited to a tent clearing, fire ring, box latrine, and a picnic table (except in a Type 1 recreational use setting where tables are prohibited). Each type of primitive camping is discussed below.

### *Canoe Camping*

There are currently 10 primitive remote canoe campsites located on 3 different areas of Johnson Falls Reservoir and the Peshtigo River. These sites are accessible only by water, stays are limited to one night, and they cannot be reserved. The State Forest Superintendent will renovate the sites as needed.

#### **Alternatives Considered**

##### *Canoe Camping*

The primitive water access campsites on the two islands in High Falls will stay in the plan. At the time of implementation a multi-discipline group will examine the islands for the best sites to minimize human impacts. Possibly four sites on one island will be selected to keep one island free of camping impacts. Firewood can be delivered to the island sites periodically to minimize depletion of dead and downed wood.

### *Primitive Water Camping*

Primitive water campsites, new to the Peshtigo River State Forest, are being introduced on the forest. Up to nine primitive campsites would be built along the Peshtigo River and its reservoirs. Three sites would be located on Caldron Falls Reservoir- one near Crane Bay, one between Boat Landings 9 and 10, and one near Boat Landing 9 and the Caldron Falls dam. On High Falls Reservoir, there would be one site north of Old Veterans Lake campground. Four sites would be located on two islands on High Fall Reservoir, north of Bass Bay. On Johnson Falls Reservoir, one site would be located on the north side of the reservoir. Primitive campsites generally are widely dispersed, and have a minimal clearing and a primitive soil surface. Primitive campsites are limited to a tent clearing, fire ring, box latrine and a picnic table. These sites are accessible by watercraft or by foot.

### *Equestrian Campground*

An equestrian campground would be established on the forest, west of High Falls Reservoir and east of Parkway Road. The proposed campground would include 20 rustic sites and would feature such amenities as vault toilets, potable water, manure bins, a corral area, and a group gathering area with an open-sided shelter, access to horse trails, and a firewood bin. Individual campsites would have fire rings, picnic tables, hitching posts, tent pads and a parking area. Some of the campsites would be drive-through and some would be back-in sites. Campsites would be large enough to accommodate large-wheeled units. Adjacent to this campground would be a group horse campground. This would include two large sites that can accommodate up to 60 people. Day-use trail parking would be available near the equestrian campground.

This site was selected for an equestrian campground because of its accommodating size and easy access from a county highway. The site is also situated near other recreational facilities and trails, and does would not conflict with proposed Native Community Management Areas. The site is relatively flat, and has both forested and opens areas.

### **Alternatives Considered**

#### *Equestrian Campground*

Three alternative sites were discussed for possible location of the equestrian campground. The first location was near Caldron Falls off of Landing 12 Lane. This site was not selected because of its proximity to a proposed Native Community Management Area and the potential for invasive species spread. The second location was north of Bass Bay off of Parkway Road. This site was not selected because of poor topography (e.g. rolling hills, exposed bedrock), possible user conflicts, an inability to connect to a trail system, and the proximity to private homes. The third site is located near county forest land and Bushman Road. This site was not selected because of possible user conflicts and the poor road network. In addition, the site is not large enough to accommodate this type of campground, and it has soils that are unsuitable for equestrian trails.



## Day-Use Areas

As of 2006, there are two designated day-use areas on the Peshtigo River State Forest. One, Stephenson Town Park, is operated in conjunction with the Town of Stephenson. The other, Wayside Park, is located just off of Highway 64 and is operated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Day-use areas typically provide activities like picnicking, sunbathing, and swimming. Some sites may also feature scenic vistas, hiking and nature trails, and boat landings, occasionally with fishing piers. Currently, many of the 15 boat landings within the Peshtigo River State Forest are also intensively used for these activities.

In addition to the existing day-use areas at Stephenson Town Park and Wayside Park, two new day-use areas would be developed. The new East Bay day-use location would be a fee-required area and would include drinking water, vault toilets with a changing area, a designated beach with a marked swimming area, picnic tables, grills, fire rings, fishing pier and a 100-car parking lot. In addition to the day-use area, the existing boat landing would be renovated to meet accessibility standards. A boarding dock and a paved parking lot with space for 75 cars and trailers would be provided. This site was selected because of good southern and western exposure, a natural sandy river bottom, easy access from current road network, and established history of this type of use on site.

A second day-use area would be adjacent to Boat Landing 9 on Caldron Falls Reservoir. Like the East Bay day-use area, the new Musky Point Beach would be a fee-required area. This day-use area would include drinking water, vault toilets with a changing area, a designated beach with a marked swimming area, picnic tables, fishing pier, grills, fire rings, and a 100-car parking lot. The boat landing and trailer parking would be repositioned from its current location to a spot farther to the west. A mobility-impaired accessible boat landing and boarding dock, and a paved parking lot with a space for up to 30 cars and trailers would be included. This site was selected because it already has this established use; it has good southern exposure, and a sandy river bottom. It is also of sufficient size to accommodate users and the development would be at the end of a town road that would not create conflict with private landowners.

## Alternatives Considered

### *Day-use Areas*

One alternative site that was discussed for development as a day use area was Boat Landing 8. This site was not selected because it is too small, and is already experiencing high levels of use. As a result, environmental damage is occurring including soil compaction, erosion of the shoreline, and tree injury. Spatially, there is no room to expand this area due to the nearby wetlands and adjacent residential properties. These properties, along with the associated vehicle traffic, have the potential to create user conflicts. Finally, with little or no room to change the design of the site, the boat launch would be too close to the potential swimming area, creating an obvious safety concern.

Others sites on Caldron Falls and on High Falls were considered but were not selected for similar reasons.

## Boat Landings

With more than 3,000 acres of reservoir surface area, water-based recreation is one of the primary attractions for Peshtigo River State Forest visitors. Existing boat landings have different characteristics regarding their degree of development and type of access to the water. These boat landing types include canoe slides, carry-in, cement plank, and gravel. The State Forest Superintendent has the authority to close and relocate boat landings as needed.

### *Existing Boat Landings*

Boat Landing	Cement Plank	Car / Trailer Capacity	Picnic Table	Fishing Piers
West Bay / #1	X	15		X
Bass Bay / #2	X	10		
East Bay / #3	X	20		
Twin / #4	X	20		
Channel / #5	X	20		X
Woods Creek / #6	X	30		X
Rock Cove / #7	X	40	X	X
Caldron Bay / #8	X	25	X	X
Musky Point / #9	X	30	X	
North Bay / #10	X	15		
Crandall Creek / #11	X	15		
Roaring Rapids / #12	X	20		
Thunder / #14	X	15		
Peshtigo / #1	X	7		
Potato Rapids / #1	X	15	X	X

Proposed Boat Landing Improvements would include: parking lot changes / additional parking, facilities (bathroom, changing rooms, water, and fishing pier), launch approach, and boat boarding dock.

*Proposed Boat Landing Developments*

<b>Boat Landing</b>	<b>Parking Changes</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Launch Approach</b>	<b>Dock</b>
<b>West Bay / #1</b>	Reconfigure existing 15 space lot	NA	Paved Approach	Yes
<b>Bass Bay / #2</b>	Reconfigure existing 10 space lot	NA	No change	No
<b>East Bay / #3</b>	Provide 75 car lot	Water, vault toilets	Paved Approach	Yes
<b>Twin / #4</b>	Reconfigure existing 20 space lot	NA	Paved Approach	Yes
<b>Channel / #5</b>	Reconfigure existing 20 space lot; add 20 space lot to the south of existing lot	Vault toilet, water	Paved Approach	Yes
<b>Woods Creek / #6</b>	No change to existing 30 space lot	NA	Paved Approach	Yes
<b>Rock Cove / #7</b>	Reconfigure existing 40 space lot and add new 40 space lot	Vault toilet, water, fishing pier	Paved Approach	Yes
<b>Caldron Bay / #8</b>	Reconfigure existing 25 space lot and add new 15 space lot	Vault toilet, water	Renovate and pave approach and launch ramp	Yes
<b>Musky Point / #9</b>	Reposition current parking to the west, add 30 space lot	Vault toilet, water	Reposition to the west and pave	Yes
<b>North Bay / #10</b>	Reconfigure existing 15 space lot and add new 15 spaces	NA	Paved approach	Yes
<b>Crandall Creek / #11</b>	Reconfigure existing 15 space lot and add new 30 spaces	Vault toilet, water	Renovate and pave approach and launch ramp	Yes
<b>Roaring Rapids / #12</b>	No changes to existing 20 space lot	Vault toilet, changing rooms, water	Renovate and pave launch ramp	No
<b>Thunder / #14</b>	Reconfigure existing 15 space lot	Fishing pier	Renovate and pave approach and launch ramp	Yes
<b>Peshtigo / #1</b>	Reconfigure existing 7 space lot	NA	Renovate and pave approach and launch ramp	Yes
<b>Potato Rapids / #1</b>	Reconfigure existing 15 space lot and add 10 new spaces	Fishing pier	Renovate and pave approach and launch ramp	Yes
<b>Medicine Brook</b>	Reconfigure existing 5 space lot	NA	Add canoe slide	No
<b>Seymour Rapids</b>	Reconfigure existing 10 space lot	NA	Renovate existing canoe take out and put in	No
<b>Spring Rapids</b>	Reconfigure existing 5 space lot and add 5 new spaces	NA	Renovate existing canoe take out	No

## Non-Motorized Trails

The Peshtigo River State Forest would continue to offer a variety of designated trails under the proposed Master Plan. The phrase “designated trails” refers to trails that are designed, maintained, and limited to specific uses, such as hiking or interpretive nature trails. Currently, there is a designated moderate non-motorized trail system located within the Peshtigo River State Forest. These trails are available for recreational activities including hiking, biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. In addition to designated trails, the Peshtigo River State Forest offers numerous miles of non-designated “woods roads”, which are open to hiking, biking, horseback riding, and snowshoeing (unless closed for a specific activity). A “woods road” is generally a primitive single-lane road with two vegetation-free wheel tracks. The tread is usually compacted native soil, often sand or gravel, but sometimes less stable material such as clay or a mixture of sand and muck. The woods road is typically not maintained, therefore washouts and ruts are sometimes encountered.

### *Hiking*

The existing eight miles of designated hiking trails and canoe portage trails would be maintained under the Plan. Day-hiking opportunities would continue to be offered on the woods road network and various other trails. Two new primitive trails - one around Caldron Falls and one around High Falls - would be developed. The Caldron Falls trail would be approximately 12 miles in length and the High Falls trail would be about 16 miles in length. The exact lengths of these trails would be determined in the field. A primitive trail is a single-file walking path usually established with the native soil as a tread surface. The path is narrow, with little or no clearing done and little or no annual maintenance. It most closely resembles game trails that are kept open due to regular use by deer and other animals.

In order to promote the sustainability of primitive trails, occasional management would be necessary. Such management would include the placement of culverts or stepping stones at stream crossings, constructing sections of flow-through boardwalk across wetland or seep areas, and other measures to prevent soil erosion and environmental damage.

These trails would be open to hiking, snowshoeing, and horseback riding, and would generally follow the shoreline of the Peshtigo River, Caldron Falls Flowage and High Falls Flowage. A similar trail, about five miles in length, would be established at Potato Rapids Flowage. In addition to using existing trail segments, new sections of trail will be developed. Additional trails would be available for hikers to visit designated scenic vistas. These vistas would be located at The Narrows, High Banks, and Seymour Rock. Finally, a new one mile self-guided, accessible interpretive trail would be developed at Old Veterans Lake Campground. This trail would also serve as a snowshoe trail in the winter season.

### *Mountain Biking*

A new 15 to 20 mile-long mountain bike loop would be developed. This new trail system would be located within the Spring Rapids Trail System with future expansion into the Seymour Rapids section. This trail system would be designed to challenge a variety of different skill levels. A portion of the trail would be routed on closed forest roads, which would provide a wide tread surface suitable for casual or family biking. A “challenge” segment of the trail would be developed with a narrow course in a hilly area. Under the new trail designation, the best available design standards would be employed to ensure minimal erosion from mountain bike use. During the redesign process, portions of the trail may be closed. The forest staff would include area mountain bike clubs in the development and implementation of a mountain bike trail management plan.

### *Horseback Riding*

Horseback riding opportunities on the Peshtigo River State Forest would increase. The state forest would provide up to 25 miles of designated equestrian trails stemming from a trailhead at the proposed Equestrian Campground. In addition, horses may be ridden on roads, snowmobile trails, and other undesignated trails that are not indicated as closed. Horseback riding is prohibited on designated nature, hiking, or mountain biking trails. These trails would have a “no horses” sign posted at the trailhead. The Peshtigo River State Forest would cooperate with local horse riding clubs to develop the trails. (Property manager could prohibit horses in other areas if needed.)

Under the new trail designations, the best available design standards would be employed to ensure minimal erosion for horse-riding use. A new trailhead would be built near the proposed horse campground. This would accommodate 20 trailers and would also have a vault toilet.

### *Cross-Country Skiing*

At present, eight miles of designated cross-country ski trails are available on the Peshtigo River State Forest. In addition to the maintenance of the current trail system, future expansion is planned. Two trail systems are currently groomed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with a local ski club: the Seymour Rapids and Spring Rapids trail systems. Some moderate adjustments would be made to the Spring Rapids Trail System to avoid conflicts with creek crossing and user conflicts. Moreover, a trail connecting both systems would be built on state land. Cross-country skiing in ungroomed areas is also available across most of the Peshtigo River State Forest. An upgrade to the Spring Rapids trailhead would be made, with amenities to include a vault toilet, water, and a shelter. A new trailhead would be built at the entrance of the Seymour Rapids Trail. Amenities would include a vault toilet and water. As with most State trail systems, trail passes would be required.

### *Snowshoeing*

Snowshoeing is currently allowed everywhere on the forest except on groomed, designated cross-country ski trails. In addition, the Plan would designate and promote the use of the self-guided nature trail at Old Veterans Lake Park and the primitive hiking trails along the flowages.

### *Archery*

An archery trail will continue to be offered in conjunction with the Woodland Archery Club in southwest corner of the Potato Rapids property. This trail would be maintained for the practice of archery skills and holding archery competitions.

### *Motorized Trails*

#### *Snowmobile*

Currently the Peshtigo River State Forest has over 20 miles of snowmobile trails that link state land with private and county snowmobile trails. Snowmobile trails within the Peshtigo River State Forest are generally developed to NR 44's Lightly Developed trail standards, and are operated on both state and private land. Sections of the trail on private land are used through land lease agreements, often operated by snowmobile clubs. Overall, there would be no significant changes to the snowmobile trails located on the Peshtigo River State Forest. Snowmobile trail parking would be available at Boat Landings 3, 5, and 9.

At the discretion of the Forest Superintendent, changes to the Peshtigo River State Forest snowmobile trail system may be made to ensure safety; to keep snowmobiles off roads; as a response to a loss in route access across private lands; if resource degradation develops; and/or if unacceptable user conflicts occur. Any changes must be consistent with the requirements of the area's land use classification.

#### *Cycles, 4x4s, and Other Licensed Motor Vehicles (Forest Road Access)*

The policy regarding the use of street licensed motor vehicles, following state statute, would remain unchanged. Under this policy, licensed cycles, 4x4s, and other vehicles meeting street-legal requirements may operate on open Peshtigo River State Forest roads (including logging roads) that are not bermed, gated or signed as closed. Unlicensed and unregistered motor vehicles are not allowed on the state forest.

#### *All-Terrain Vehicles*

The Department supports the development and maintenance of All-Terrain Vehicle riding opportunities on appropriate trails, particularly trails that contribute to regional trail networks. To support both statewide and regional goals, the use of All-Terrain Vehicles on the Peshtigo River State Forest is authorized on trails designated for All-Terrain Vehicle use. Winter All-Terrain Vehicle riding is permitted on the existing snowmobile trails when the snowmobile trails are officially open. The state forest would continue to cooperate with regional partners and maintain the existing All-Terrain Vehicle trail network while maintaining environmental quality and harmony with other forest users. However, because a suitable route or routes for All-Terrain Vehicle trails on the Peshtigo River State Forest have not been identified, this plan does not designate any future All-Terrain Vehicle trail expansion. Attempts to identify potential trail options have been fraught with difficulty because of unsuitable soil types, potential conflicts with residents and other recreationists, and defining appropriate routes that can link to trail systems outside the Peshtigo River State Forest.

## Alternatives Considered

### *All-Terrain Vehicles*

One alternative that the state forest was asked to consider by users was an All-Terrain Vehicle play area south of Johnson Falls Road. This alternative was not selected because of environmental and safety concerns. Among other reasons, there is a known osprey nest in the vicinity, the proposed play area would have the potential to cause severe soil degradation, and there are liability issues with American Transmission Company.

## Other Activities and Amenities

### *Swimming*

Swimming occurs at both designated and non-designated swimming beach areas. A designated beach has a regulatory marker or posted notice. Most designated swimming areas have toilet facilities. Non-designated swim areas are any waters that are not signed as “closed to swimming.” State forests do not supply lifeguards at any beaches; swimming is at the user’s discretion.

Under the Plan, two new swimming beaches would be provided. Musky Point Beach would be developed at Boat Landing 9 on Caldron Falls Reservoir, and East Bay Beach would be developed at Boat Landing 3 on High Falls Reservoir. Swimming beaches are being proposed as integral parts of the two proposed new Day Use Areas described earlier in this document.

### *Boating, Canoe Access, and Canoe Trail*

With 3,000 acres of water and a number of streams, water-based recreation is a primary attraction for Peshtigo River State Forest visitors. Under the revised Plan, boating and canoe access sites (i.e. boat landings) would be maintained. In addition, several upgrades are planned at the boat landings as shown in the previous table.

A network of canoe trails and portages can be found within the forest boundary. Canoe campsites are found along these routes. Portages are, and would continue to be, maintained. Current trail location information may be found by contacting the forest office.

### *Fishing*

Fishing regulations are outside the scope of the proposed Master Plan. The Plan supports fishing primarily by providing water access to anglers, which includes angler access trails, boat landings and fishing piers. Fishing piers are usually located in association with campgrounds and picnic areas. A number of the piers are accessible to the disabled. The Forest Superintendent may construct or relocate fishing piers as deemed necessary, consistent with the land use classification standards for the site.

Some access sites are open in the winter for ice fishing. The Towns determine the plowing of town roads for ice fishing access.

### *Hunting and Trapping*

Hunting and trapping regulations are outside the scope of the Peshtigo River State Forest Master Plan. The Peshtigo River State Forest would continue to offer opportunities for small and big game hunting and trapping. The diversity of forest types, lakes and wetlands found on the property would continue to provide high quality habitat for many game species. Miles of logging roads and non-designated trails would continue to be open for hunting access by foot and/or motor vehicle.

### *Education and Interpretation*

The Peshtigo River State Forest encourages visitors to take the opportunity to learn about forestry, natural history, wildlife management, and other natural resources topics. Staff has taken part in school programs and camps, and given talks and tours to area clubs on these issues. In the proposed shared facility with Governor Thompson State Park, the forest and park headquarters would have space for regularly scheduled interpretive programs. As mentioned, a proposed self-guided accessible nature trail would be created at Old Veterans Lake Campground.

### *Recreation Land Use Agreements*

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has a long history of cooperation in managing and maintaining public recreational and community facilities. Examples of our partners who have land use agreements include Marinette County, the Town of Stephenson, and the Woodland Archery Club. Land use agreements on the Peshtigo River State Forest would continue to be evaluated periodically.



## **Proposed Boundary Expansion Options for Consideration**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is proposing a project boundary expansion to the Peshtigo River State Forest as part of the overall property master planning process. The possible boundary expansion areas (see Proposed Boundary Expansion Map) are located in five blocks surrounding the existing boundary and total approximately 47,000 acres. These areas were selected because of their ability to produce additional ecological, economic, and social value for the property and region. Each of these areas has unique benefits and limitations, and will be discussed in detail below.

## **Purpose of Boundary Expansion**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources administers an active land acquisition program for the purpose of protecting water resources, managing forests, providing wildlife and endangered resource habitat, and providing outdoor recreational and educational opportunities for all citizens. Acquisition of property within key project boundaries such as the Peshtigo River State Forest would provide resource managers with the necessary land base to implement specific natural resource and recreation responsibilities. These lands are held in trust for the public to enjoy for fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, sightseeing, bird watching, boating, swimming, outdoor education and numerous other public benefits.

One of the critical elements in natural resource management is forest and habitat fragmentation. When possible, creating large blocks of land improves native habitats and makes natural resource management more effective. This boundary expansion would allow for greater resource protection, particularly of endangered resources and the greater Peshtigo River watershed. There will also be improved connectivity with County and National forests, as well as access via local and county roads.

## **Current Boundary of Peshtigo River State Forest**

Established in 2001, the Peshtigo River State Forest is the smallest of Wisconsin's northern state forests, comprising 9,200 acres. Bordering the newly-created Governor Thompson State Park, the property is long and linear in shape, and surrounds the Peshtigo River and associated flowages from Roaring Rapids downstream to Spring Rapids. Farther downstream, the Potato Rapids Reservoir is also included in the state forest. The property borders approximately 25 miles of the Peshtigo River including: Caldron Falls Reservoir, a 1,180-acre reservoir; High Falls Flowage, a 1,670-acre reservoir; Johnson Falls Flowage, a 158-acre reservoir; the Fly Fishing Stretch of the Peshtigo River; and Potato Rapids Flowage, a 281-acre reservoir.

Located in an area with abundant publicly owned lands including County Forest lands, the Nicolet National Forest, and Governor Thompson State Park, the Peshtigo River State Forest is an excellent addition to the regional amenity base. Wisconsin Public Service Corporation, a natural gas and electric utility, was the former owner of the property and still maintains ownership of property adjacent to Peshtigo River State Forest, most

notably along High Falls and Johnson Falls reservoirs. Private landholdings are scattered along the current forest boundary and are likely to increase as private property owners seek to purchase highly desirable property adjacent to public lands.

### **Trends and Issues Facing the Peshtigo River Area**

- Large blocks of contiguous land changing hands rapidly.
- Development pressures are increasing and smaller parcel are being created.
- Demand for public access for water is increasing.
- Forested lands are becoming more fragmented.
- Demand for regional recreation trails is increasing.
- Some ecosystems/habitat types are rare or declining.
- More people are purchasing land.
- The demographics and values of forest landowners are changing.
- Protecting undeveloped river frontage is important.

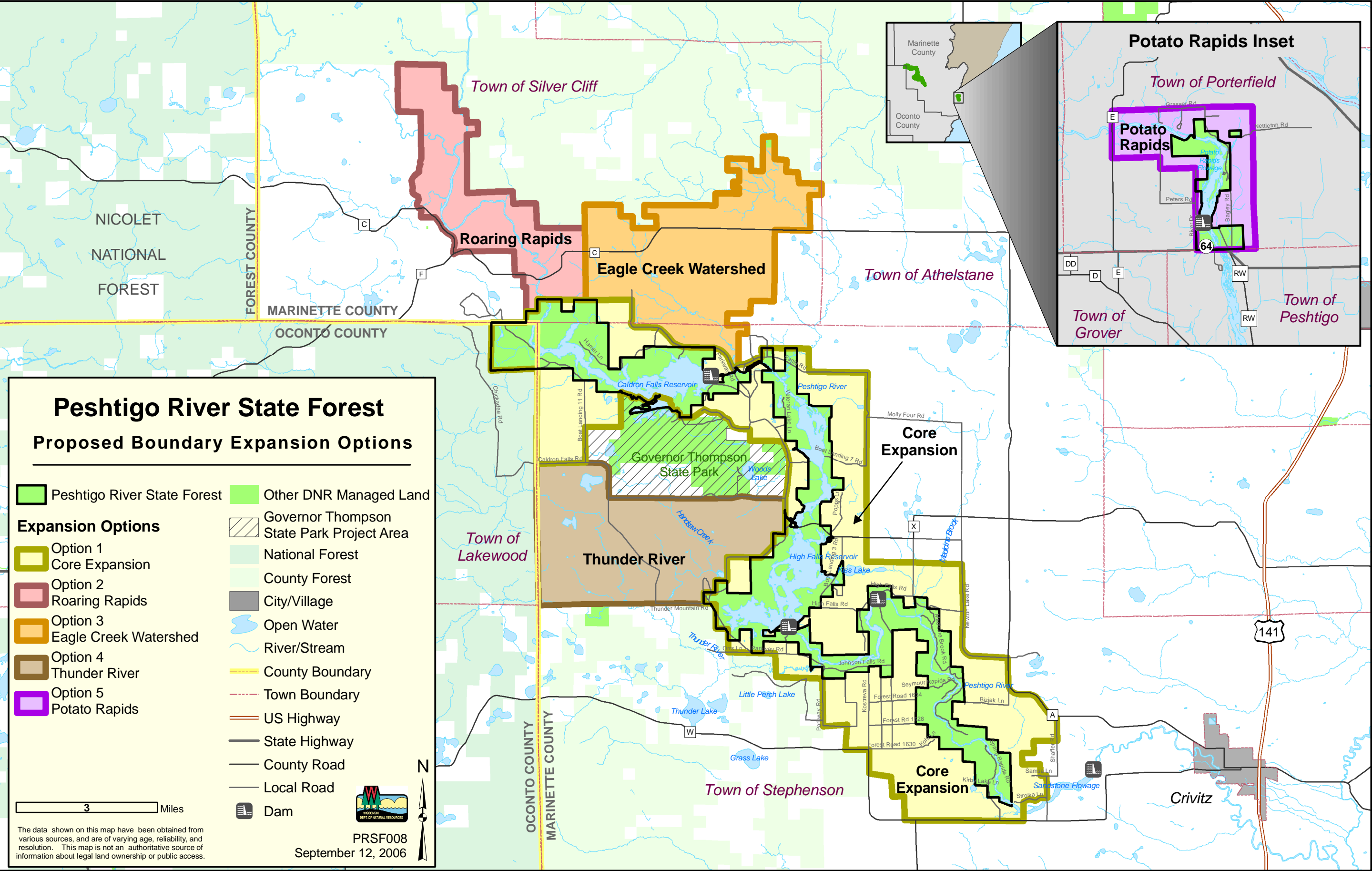
### **Benefits of Proposed Boundary Expansion**

- Support regional recreation opportunities including connector trails.
- Protect high conservation value forests, unique habitats.
- Provide additional protection for the water quality of the Peshtigo River and tributaries.
- Protect undeveloped shoreline along the Peshtigo River and its flowages.
- Connectivity to other large blocks of public lands for recreation, ecological benefits.
- Long-term sustainability of high quality and productive forests.
- Improved access for recreational opportunities and enhanced management opportunities.
- Contribute to the economy of Marinette County through the harvest of forest products and through increased tourism.

### **Boundary Expansion Options**

Five areas have been identified as possible Peshtigo River State Forest expansion areas to address the ecological, economic and social trends facing the property and region. Each of these areas has unique benefits and limitations. Each area can be considered individual, all together or any combination. The Department considers each of these areas as having significant ecological, economic and social opportunities, but realizes the total acreage considered is significant. The objective is to work with local governments, landowners and others to identify strategies to meet the needs of all parties.







### Option 1: Core Expansion

This area surrounds most of the existing property boundary and encompasses 24,774 acres of land (see Core Expansion Map). This acquisition would provide additional protection to lands adjacent to the Peshtigo River and the river itself by consolidating existing properties of high conservation value. In addition, new public access points and regional trail linkages could be established.

#### *Acquisition Goals*

1. Consolidate and connect existing state holdings that contain important public values and/or facilitate efficient land management.
2. Provide a buffer against incompatible land uses that would diminish management options or visitor experience in the river corridor.
3. Protect critical portions of rivers or streams which, if protected, would ensure the quality of the larger watershed.
4. Establish new and enhance existing accesses to public waters and lands.
5. Provide the capability to support local and regional recreational trail developments including long distance trails and trails connecting to local routes and services.

### Option 2: Roaring Rapids

This area lies northwest of the Peshtigo River State Forest boundary and encompasses 4,666 acres of land (see Roaring Rapids Map). This acquisition would complete the protection of more than 50 miles of the upper Peshtigo River corridor as well as protect a unique and highly prized section of rapids. This would create a large continuous block of state, county and National Forest land along the river.

#### *Acquisition Goals*

1. Protect the Peshtigo River corridor, particularly this unique, highly prized section of rapids.
2. Provide linkages between blocks of existing public lands to provide important habitat connectivity, connect regional recreation trails and protect tributaries.
3. Provide additional public access to view a unique portion of the Peshtigo River, an important natural feature of statewide significance.

### Option 3: Eagle Creek Watershed

This area lies north of the Peshtigo River State Forest boundary and encompasses 7,603 acres of land (see Eagle Creek Watershed Map). Acquisition of this piece would create a large block of continuous forest land, most of which is presently under the ownership of the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands. It would also block state owned forest land with county owned forest land to create a larger, continuous block of public ownership. Another benefit of this acquisition is the protection of the Eagle Creek watershed, which flows into the Peshtigo River.

#### *Acquisition Goals*

1. Create a large block of continuous forest land, most of which is presently under a single ownership and could be secured to maintain and enhance existing public uses.
2. Connect state and county owned forest land to create a large, continuous block of public ownership.
3. To protect the Eagle creek watershed, which flows into the Peshtigo River.

### Option 4: Thunder River

This area lies west of the Peshtigo River State Forest boundary and encompasses 7,140 acres of land (see Thunder River Map). This is an especially important component of the proposed boundary expansion. This acquisition would not only protect the Thunder River - a major tributary of the Peshtigo River - but would provide a buffer around the Governor Thompson State Park. In addition, acquisition of this area would connect state and federal forest land in Oconto County.

#### *Acquisition Goals*

1. Protect the Thunder River, a major tributary of the Peshtigo River.
2. Connect state and National Forest land in Oconto County.
3. Provide a buffer around Governor Thompson State Park.
4. Protect established regional trail systems, including trailheads and spur trails between multiple owners, and provide an opportunity for new amenities.

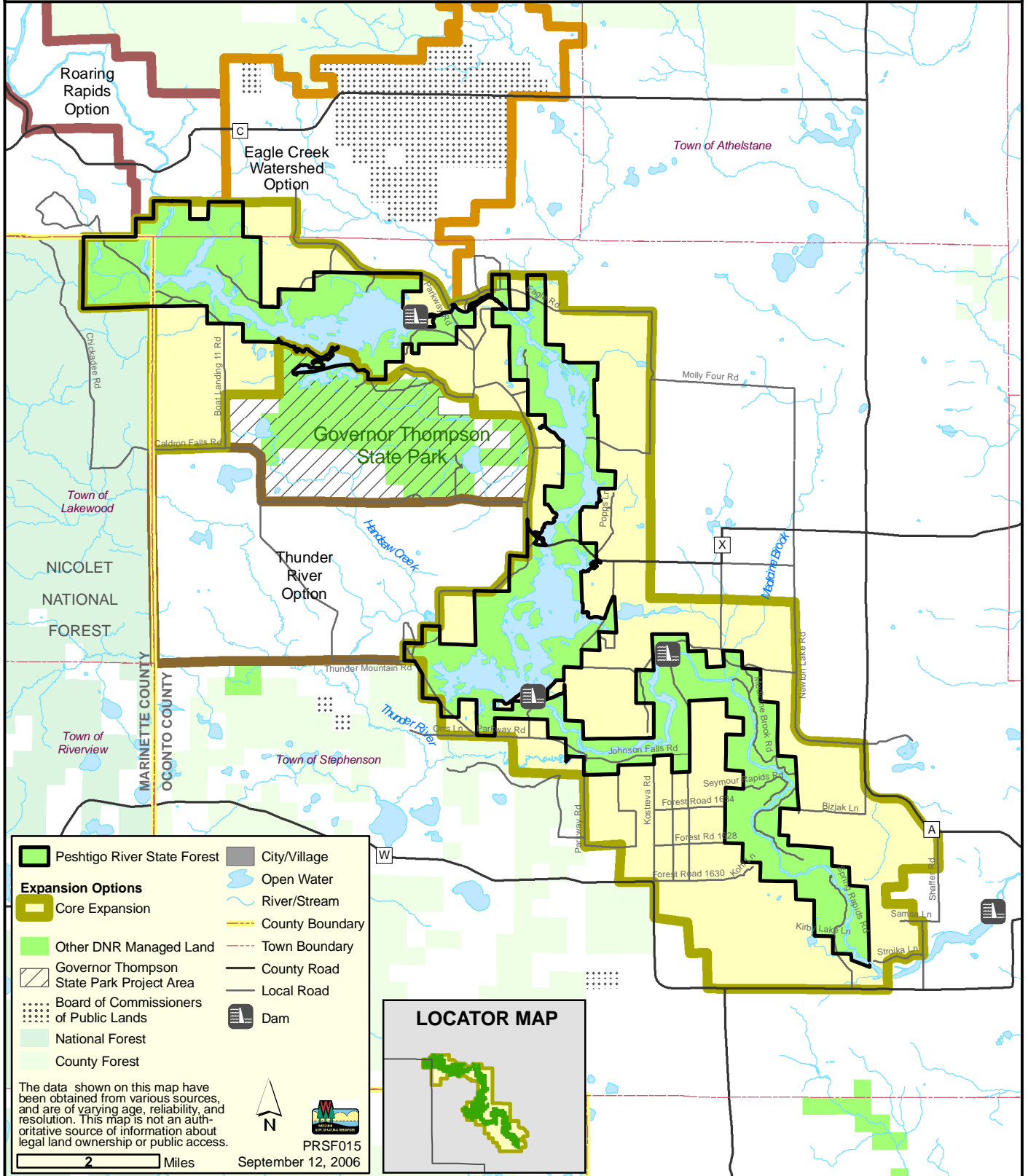
### Option 5: Potato Rapids

This area lies north, west and east from the Peshtigo River State Forest boundary and encompasses 3,260 acres of land (see Potato Rapids Map). This acquisition will create a larger block of continuous forest land and provide a connection with Highway E. It will also provide watershed protection and improved access to the existing Potato Rapids portion of the forest.

#### *Acquisition Goal*

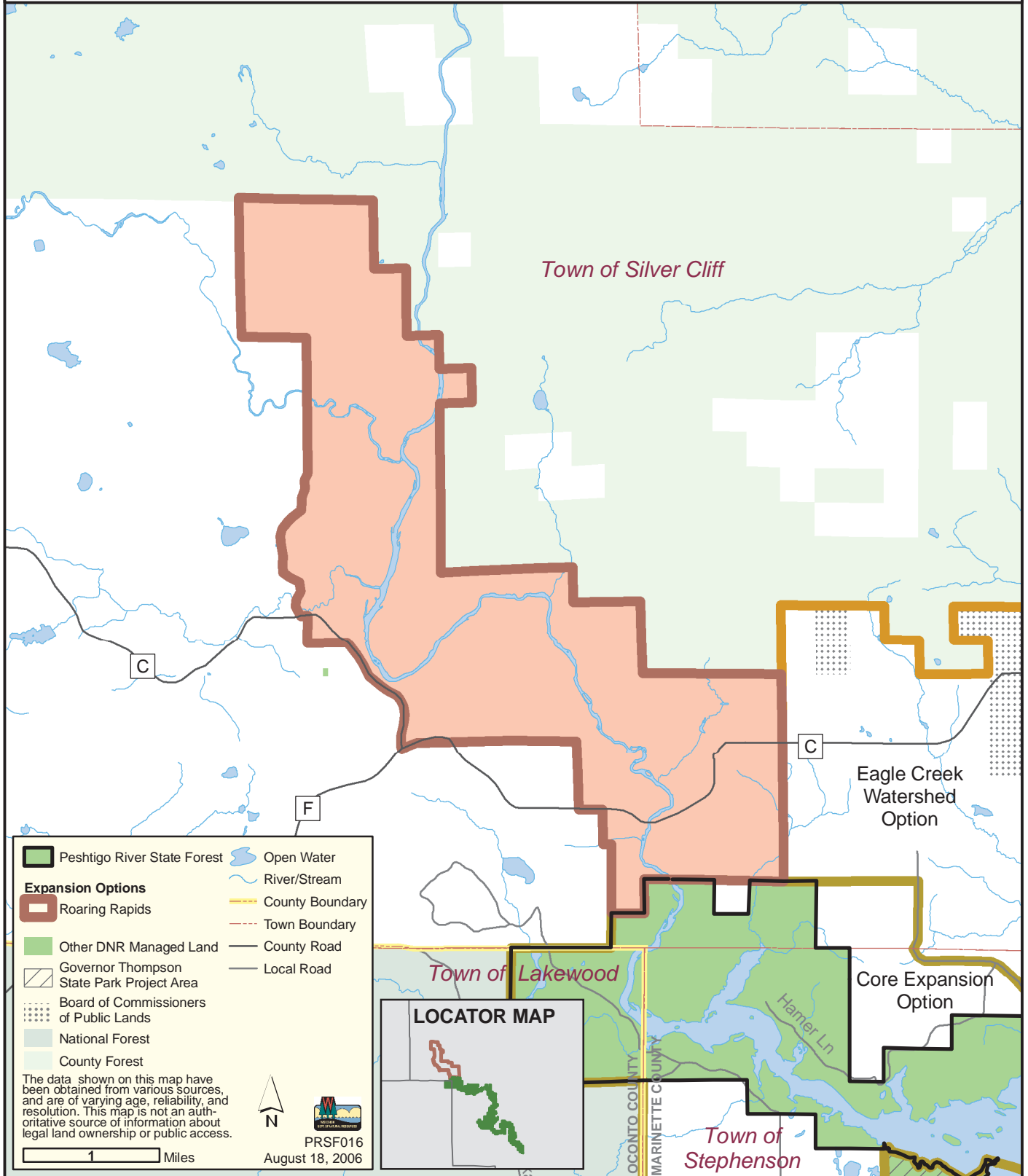
1. Create a larger block of continuous forest land, connected with Highway E and other public roads, providing watershed protection and improved access.

# Peshtigo River State Forest Proposed Boundary Expansion Option 1 - Core Expansion 24,774 Acres

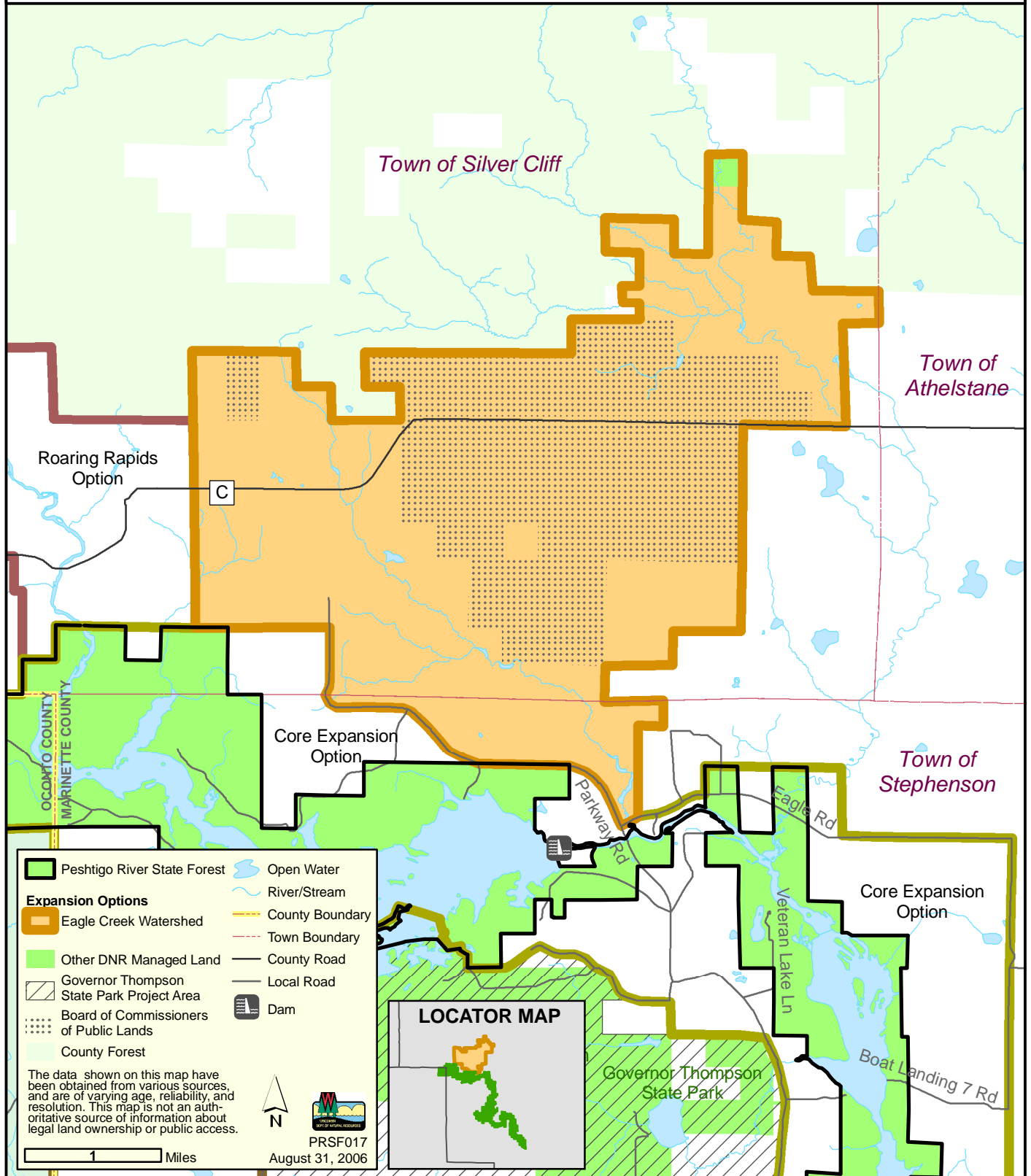




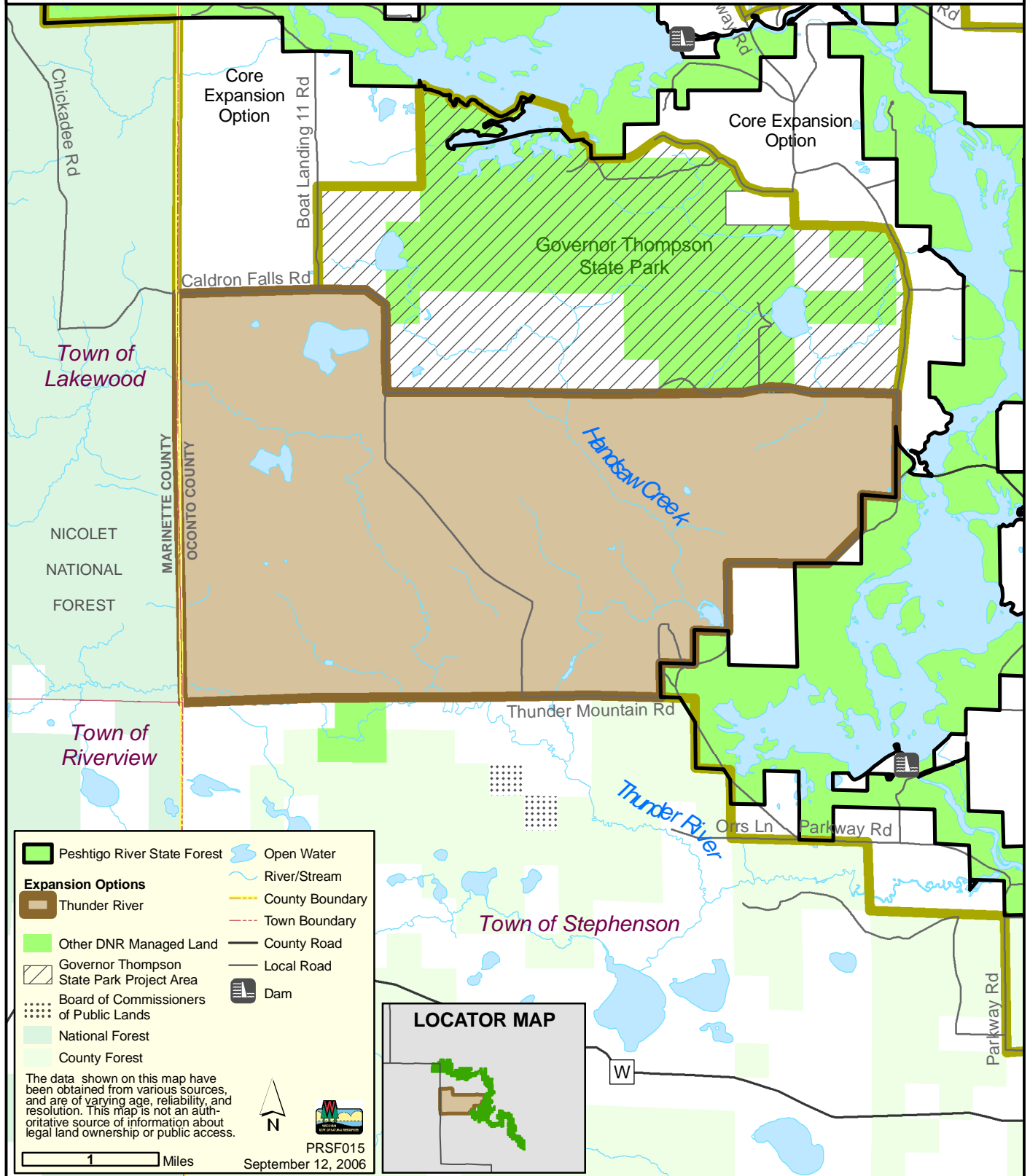
# Peshtigo River State Forest Proposed Boundary Expansion Option 2 - Roaring Rapids 4,666 Acres



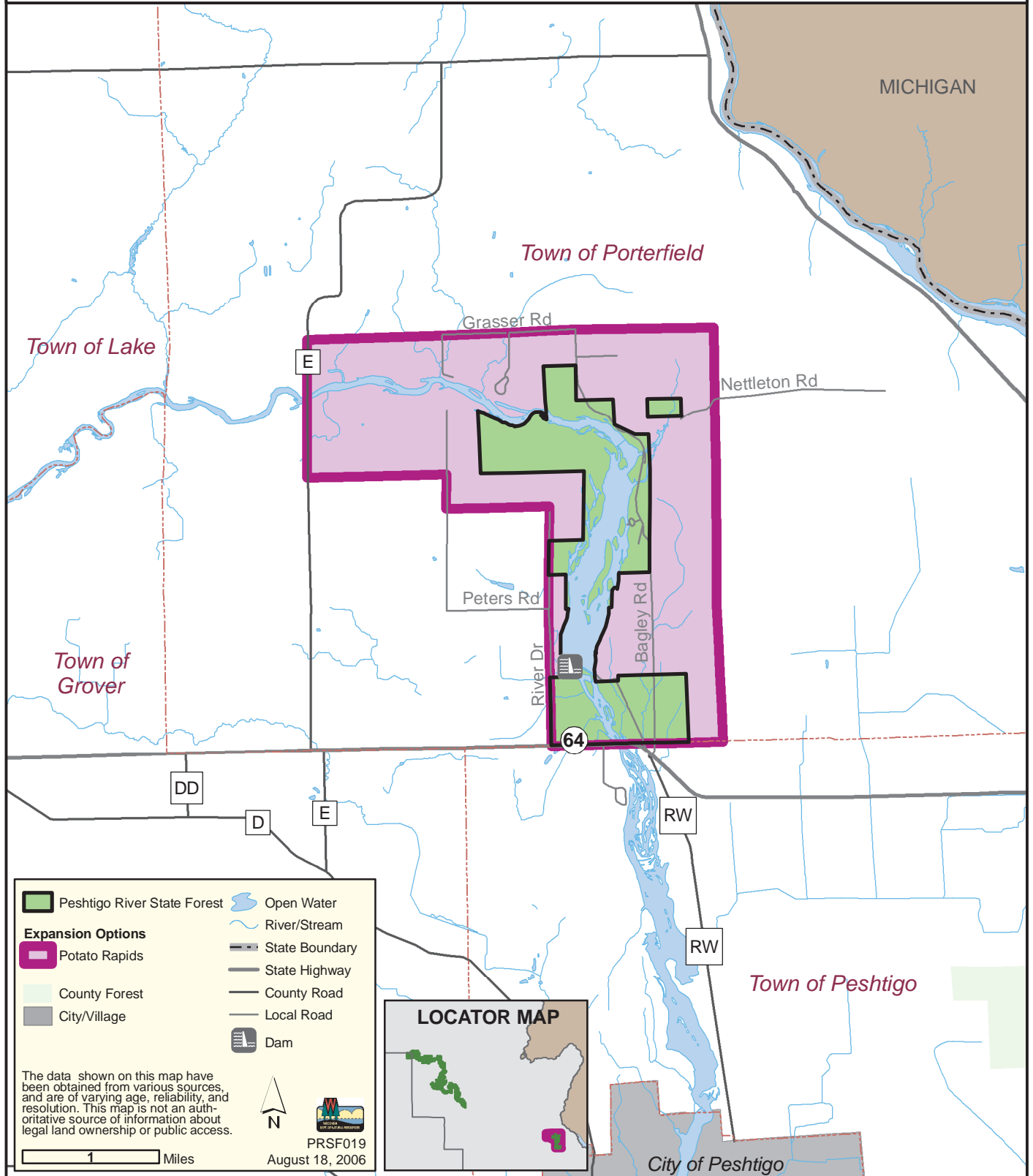
# Peshtigo River State Forest Proposed Boundary Expansion Option 3 - Eagle Creek Watershed 7,603 Acres



# Peshtigo River State Forest Proposed Boundary Expansion Option 4 - Thunder River 7,140 Acres



# Peshtigo River State Forest Proposed Boundary Expansion Option 5 - Potato Rapids 3,260 Acres





## Department Land Acquisition Policies

The Department is very sensitive to concerns raised by proposed boundary expansions. Any acquisition would require the Department to appraise the property and purchase the land from *willing sellers only*. All purchases by the Department are at fair market value based on an appraisal.

Local governments and communities are often concerned about the perceived reduction of the tax base when private lands come under public ownership. Unlike private landowners who pay taxes based on the assessed value of their property, lands purchased by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources after January 1, 1992 pay aids-in-lieu-of-taxes that are equal to property taxes that would have been paid had the land remained in private ownership. According to State Statute 70.11(1), property acquired by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources comes off the tax roll. In lieu of the loss of tax base, each taxing jurisdiction receives an aid payment equivalent to property taxes.

The only difference between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources aid-in-lieu-of-tax program and private lands is that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' program relates to assessed value. For lands purchased by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources the initial assessed value is set at the purchase price of the property which is based on an appraisal. In subsequent years, this value is adjusted to reflect the change in the assessed value of the land in the taxation district. All other aspects of the way Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources pays aid-in-lieu-of-tax are the same as those for a local taxpayer.

As mentioned, properties in the Peshtigo River State Forest Boundary would be acquired only under a willing seller/willing buyer agreement, or by donation. The Peshtigo River State Forest emphasizes priority on acquisition of:

- Large tracts of undeveloped lands
- Parcels with water frontage
- Environmentally/ecologically sensitive areas
- Parcels for future recreation sites

This is accomplished by fee purchase, purchase of easements, exchange, donation, or conservation easements. There are some areas within Peshtigo River State Forest Boundary Expansion where the Department would not pursue acquisition including areas where subdivision plats have already been drafted. In addition, the Department would not pursue acquisition of land deemed undesirable, such as an abandoned dumpsite that could present a liability for hazardous materials. Acquisitions are subject to the approval of the Natural Resources Board and the Governor.

## **Management Elements Contained in All Alternatives**

The following laws, policies, facilities, and other factors would be included in every alternative and are considered mandatory elements of all alternatives. A complete list of legal and administrative provisions and policies will be included in the Draft plan.

### **Tribal Consultation**

In compliance with the Chippewa Treaty rights litigation and the Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 44, the Department of Natural Resources consults with tribal governments during the development of master plans for state lands in the Ceded territory.

The Department of Natural Resources staff and tribal representatives agreed to the following goal for Wisconsin State Forests: “In consultation with tribal governments, manage the land and other natural resources to provide for the exercise of Chippewa Treaty rights in accordance with applicable law.”

### **Health and Safety**

The Department of Natural Resources policy is to identify and remove trees that are deemed as hazards within designated use areas such as campgrounds, picnic areas, parking lots, and high use trail systems. Designated use areas will be maintained to provide a safe environment for those using these areas.

- Construction of facilities will follow guidelines set forth within the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Administrative Department of Natural Resources buildings are located within the boundaries of the state forest and will be maintained and upgraded as necessary.

### **Forest Pest Control**

As stated in Wisconsin Statutes 26.30, “It is the public policy of the state to control forest pests on or threatening forests of the state...” This means that all proposed management alternatives for the Peshtigo River State Forest must include the ability to implement appropriate forest pest control measures as needed.

### **Fire Suppression**

As stated in Wisconsin Statutes 26.11, “The Department is vested with power, authority and jurisdiction in all matters relating to the prevention, detection and suppression of forest fires outside the limits of incorporated villages and cities in the state except as provided in sub (2), and to do all things necessary in the exercise of such power, authority and jurisdiction”. This means that all proposed management alternatives for the Peshtigo River State Forest must include the ability to implement appropriate forest fire suppression measures as needed.

## **Endangered and Threatened Resources**

All management actions occurring on the state forest will be done in a manner which does not result in a direct taking of any known threatened / endangered resource.

## **Utility Corridor**

There are many easement and land use agreements with various public utility companies for facilities such as powerlines and gas pipelines running through forest property. All existing agreements will be honored.

## **Municipal Jurisdiction within the State Forest (County and Township roads)**

There are numerous state, county, and town roads within the state forest boundary. These roadways will continue to be managed outside the scope of this master plan for the Peshtigo River State Forest.

## **Easement of Record (Land use agreements)**

Easements of record and land use agreements that provide access across state property to private ownership within the forest boundary will be maintained.

## **Historical Sites**

Management activities on the state forest will take into consideration historical sites and will not knowingly impact any features of historical or cultural importance.

## **Maintain Aesthetics and Best Management Practices**

All management activities within the state forest will follow Best Management Practices for water quality. Aesthetic management guidelines will be followed as outlined in the Department of Natural Resources silviculture and forest aesthetics handbook.



## Sources for Additional Information, How to Comment, and Comment Form (see back)

The purpose of this mailing is to provide information and to receive your feedback on the Preferred Alternative and Options for the Peshtigo River State Forest.

### Information & Questions

- If you haven't received or reviewed the Preferred Alternative and Options document, request a copy by contacting Forest Superintendent Dan Mertz at: [Dan.Mertz@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:Dan.Mertz@dnr.state.wi.us) or (715)757-3965. Mr. Mertz can also address any additional questions you may have.
- Informational Open House Meetings have been scheduled for mid-October in northeastern Wisconsin. Please see the Letter from the Superintendent at the beginning of this document for details.

### For the Public Record

- Record your thoughts on this form (see back) and return it to us by mail.
- You may also email your comments to: [Dan.Mertz@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:Dan.Mertz@dnr.state.wi.us)
- Visit our web page at: [http://dnr.wi.gov/master\\_planning/ttsp\\_pesh/](http://dnr.wi.gov/master_planning/ttsp_pesh/)

Thank you for sharing your time and thoughts with us!

..... **Fold, Tape, Stamp & Mail** .....

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Apply  
Stamp

Dan Mertz, Forest Superintendent  
Peshtigo River State Forest  
N10008 Paust Lane  
Crivitz, WI 54114

TAPE HERE ↓↓↓ DO NOT STAPLE!

# PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

## Peshtigo River State Forest – Preferred Alternative and Options

OPTIONAL

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Today's date \_\_\_\_\_  
Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

☐

Please add me to your mailing list.

Recreation:

Land Management:

Boundary Expansion:

Water Resources:

Other issues: